

## **The Allure of the Watts Rebellion: Artistic Portrayals of Black Struggle, Unification, and Traumatic Healing in Los Angeles 1960s-1970s**

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### **Introduction**

Images of a burning Los Angeles plague the minds of those who have been successfully manipulated into believing the perceptions built around the social construction of the “hood.”<sup>1</sup> From the vision of the powers that constructed the city in their favor, the Watts Rebellion has forever been labeled as the time that urban African-Americans took their anger for racial injustice out on their community.<sup>2</sup> The statement mentioned above, under the guise of an Anglo-Elite power structure, still holds importance and relevance as we can compare the perceived burning images to the recent turbulence this country has faced regarding racial injustice. This project pertains to the positive outcomes of rebellion and will contribute to the historical realm of dispelling rebellions from the attachments of believed racial stereotypes. The approach that this project presents is unique because it intends on showing positivity in rebellion through the most appreciated contributions of African-American populations to the world, Black culture. This project’s mission is to show how many of these contributions were formed out of rebellion or are simply a form of rebellion within themselves. In addition to providing the depictions of the Black art that emerged through the Watts Rebellion, this paper will also discuss the repairing of the Watts community through artistic and musical outlets. Overall, the aim of this paper in contributing to the realm of African American history is to depict the diligent reframing of a sense of community and togetherness in a positive light.

## Historiography

The urban neighborhoods of Los Angeles, California, specifically the African-American populations of South Central and Watts, have attained reputations of danger, poverty, and violence from the rebellious events conducted by its citizens in 1965 due to an urban explosion from years of societal abuse and disregard. This paper is formulated to combat such notions through a positive lens, which will accolade these neighborhoods and the efforts of constructing new spheres of healing and love in their communities. It is imperative to reframe the historical prevalence of the consistently negative image of African-American Los Angeles, as too many scholars have adopted the trope of a traumatically damaged and hopeless inner city. Moving away from the familiar historical takes that hint toward the downfall of these Black urban hubs after the Watts Rebellion, this study will instead look at the positive contributions of artists and focus on the healing and rebuilding of Black communities. The compilation, interpretation, and analysis of contextual histories as well as the construction of a primary source collection, the likes of what Kelly Lytle Hernandez would call a “rebel archive,” will provide a different historical route in discussing the cultural boom in this region after the 1965 rebellion.<sup>3</sup> The definition of Hernandez’ rebel archive is uncovered in this paper while recognizing artists like Noah Purifoy and the poetic conglomerate of the Watts Prophets.

It is necessary as historians to explore contextual sourcing and preliminary scholarship in order to provide a historiographical component of discourse that would make the distinguishment of this project an original contribution. The discovery of contextual scholarship from authors like Kelly Lytle Hernandez, Josh Sides, Darnell Hunt, and many more contributing historians is essential in determining the multitude of causes and contents of the African-American struggle in

Los Angeles and how an Anglo-elite power structure has perpetuated this oppression for decades. These historiographical additions will give the foundations as to how the events of the Watts Rebellion, in which many historians focus on the detrimental outcomes, jumpstart a community-driven wave of art that functions as a healing element to the traumatic calamity perpetrated by an Anglo-elite power structure.

It is imperative to this project that the works of historian Kelly Lytle Hernandez be mentioned as the foundation of early interest toward this topic. Hernandez's sixth chapter of her text titled, "Justice for Samuel Faulkner" in *City of Inmates: Conquest, Rebellion, and the Rise of Human Caging in Los Angeles, 1771-1965*, is crucial to this paper as her contribution to the historical field provides interpretations and explicit detail on the early initiations of policing protests in African-American Los Angeles. This chapter, in combination with Hernandez's ability to discuss the history of Los Angeles through the lenses of its colonial past and early establishments of prisons and other Anglo-elite led systems, specifically "unveils the deep history of unbridled police brutality, disproportionate incarceration, and unheeded Black protest that set the stage for the Watts Rebellion of 1965. It is a story of policing incarceration, and revolt in a settler city."<sup>4</sup> This chapter by Hernandez is vital as it serves as the skeletal foundation of this paper while delivering excellent detail and rich history of these particular aspects of Los Angeles. In regard to this project, Hernandez's work is essential in providing context on the intense social dilemmas of African-Americans in Watts that led up to the rebellion. In particular, the highlights of the damaging relationship between African-American communities, state policing, and mass incarceration contribute to the efforts of scholarship this paper makes in

taking a route beyond these relationships while showing how new, beneficial relationships have been formed within Watts.

Another note of crucial historical context is provided through the work of historian Josh Sides. Side's historical contributions found within his article titled, "Straight into Compton: American Dreams, Urban Nightmares, and the Metamorphosis of a Black Suburb," shows extensive detail on the social constructs and perceptions of race in which are the agents that diminish and raise specific property values and create individual images of certain communities in both positive and negative ways. He speaks on the transformation of Compton and how the fate of the city was like many others that experienced an influx of African-American populations. Through many overlaps of race and class, this piece is essential to this project as it provides the specific documents on real estate associations, banks, and the many other details that pertain to the struggles that Black Angelinos faced under an Anglo-elite power structure. The sentiments explained through this contextual history, although not accepted and believed by Sides, will be dispelled in this paper while also driving the conversation with necessary context of early urban development of African-American Los Angeles. Furthermore, Sides' article and its discussion on the socioeconomic parameters that catalyze racial perceptions for African-Americans in Los Angeles, assist this paper's goal in dispelling the continuity in negative narratives that have swarmed Watt's history after the rebellion.

Uncovering, within the research of this topic, a thesis written by Yael R. Lipschutz is heavily credited for marking the aim for this project. In contrast to the joint historical deliberations of detriment on this topic, Lipschutz, in the dissertation titled *Noah Purifoy: Through the Fire*, captures multiple aspects of an extremely dedicated, inspirational, and

important figure to this project. The life of Noah Purifoy and his innovations to the realm of American post-war art is crucial to this project; considering that his experience of the Watts Rebellion shaped his intricate style of art, a sense of community in the arts for African-Americans in Los Angeles, a connection to Black identity through art, and lastly, this project will argue that his life and artistic contributions, providing an open route to communal healing through art in Watts. This piece by Lipschutz contributes to the primary notions of the healing and uplifting of the African-American Watts community through the artistic display, which is sought out to be the focus of this historical analysis rather than the typical juxtapositions of continual violence, neglect, and marginalization of this culturally rich and beautiful neighborhood. With the help of this scholarship, this paper will also explain the struggle with windows of depiction through Purifoy's art that highlight the experiences of African-American people in Los Angeles in the 1960s-1970s.

The absence, aside from some of the secondary sourcing within this study, of contextual histories that outline the long-lasting effects of a figurative, urban reconstruction through outlets of African-American cultural art has brought purpose for this paper's composition. The dominance of inconsistent histories that implicate African-American Los Angeles with hopeless sentiment has been at the forefront of the historical trail of African-American Los Angeles. With assistance from the previously mentioned historiography, this study's direction will consist of the groups deserving of recognition for the efforts of artistic healing and community organization after the Watts Rebellion. This paper will now shift into analyzing the primary findings within the art exhibit of Soul of a Nation and the debut album of the Watts Prophets; which all represent the rich histories of the rejuvenation of Watts through African-American artistic culture. The

following will also introduce research done on a personal basis in the form of an interview with Rita Cofield, an associate and preserver of the historical significance of the Watts Prophets' tangible establishments and their associations. Altogether, this paper's remainder will explain How these artists, musicians, organizations, and events defy the conceptions branded upon the region. Through the chaos, these forms of Black art reveal the societal turmoil perpetuated by a white elite power structure, but also show how united, preserved, and celebrated the Watts community remained after the Rebellion.

### **Visual Art**

Though there are many African-American artists, not to be ignored or forgotten, who stood by similar stances as the foremost artist discussed in this paper, revered in this study as one of the most influential sculptural artists out of Watts, California, and maybe even the U.S. as a whole, is Noah Purifoy along with his multiple artistic representations (which pertain to the essence of this article) and establishments of organizations through his mastered medium. Purifoy's "avant-garde technique born out of social conflagration" is also revered by many artistic analysts, like Rubén Martínez, who rule his artistic abstraction as a necessary route of spiritual healing.<sup>5</sup> The direction of Noah Purifoy's art, interpreted through the previous scholarship and primary discovery, is understood in this paper to provide the necessary route of spacial reclamation, cultural organization, and the overall healing of the Watts community after the Rebellion in 1965.

Agreeing that the historical stain of destruction has overshadowed Watts since the 1965 uprising, this discussion leans on the developments of author Kaelyn Danielle Rodriguez in their

thesis titled, *Watts Still Rising: Visualizing Watts's Past, Present, and Future Through Public Art and Spatial Imaginaries*.<sup>6</sup> Through spatial, racial, and artistic study, Rodriguez highlights the significance of the art movements in Watts before and after the Watts Rebellion while also discussing the new formations of marginalization and social disregard that Los Angeles' Latinx and African-American populations experience. Redlining, spatial limitations, and allocation of funds were all social dilemmas that artists, such as Noah Purifoy, experienced among the other inhabitants of color within the region; however, the dynamic was changed after the cultural boom that sparked in post-rebellious Watts.<sup>7</sup> A trait shared amongst this topic by historians Paul Von Blum and Rodriguez shows certainty in the fact that "...the riots profoundly accelerated the development of the Black arts movement in the city. The uprising and its aftermath put pressure on government agencies to provide funding for social, artistic, and cultural programming in Black communities."<sup>8</sup> Vivid conceptions like the acceleration of Black art were made real by artists like Noah Purifoy in his advancements within the world of art in Los Angeles. This paper argues that in addition to being a significant influence as an artist within the cultural boom in post-rebellious Watts, the themes presented in his art, and even within the art of his subordinates, exemplify the homage to a portion of the trauma that consistently overshadows the history of Watts; but ultimately show the concise prevalence of themes regarding social reconciliation for the Watts community. Being inspired and mentored by Noah Purifoy through his artistic initiations in 1965, Riddle's mixed-media composition titled "Bird and Diz" from the series Spirit versus Technology series 1973 shows resemblance to the nature, purpose, and resourcefulness of the art of many of the artists who were affected by the Watts Rebellion. Manipulating ruined elements found in the aftermath of the destructive events in 1965 into eye-

catching and conceptually-perplexing forms of artistic communication (both literally and figuratively) is a common trait seen through researching the multitude of African-American artists worldwide. The masterful creations depicted by Purifoy and Riddle tell a story of artists committed to their craft as well as their communities in their missions of clearing the city of rubble to use further to expand messages that transcend and repair the streets and set souls at ease. Visible in Purifoy's untitled sculpture lies homage to early African artistic implementations, a characteristic presented throughout the works of many Los Angeles-based African-American artists. Purifoy's sculptural innovations also present viewers with hovering curiosity about the processes and sources used to construct such emotional pieces. The amazement that accompanies the lingering curiosity that is developed when engaging with Purifoy's art is heightened through the journeys and struggles that went into finding the media to make the art and can also be paralleled to the lives of Black artists in Los Angeles prior to the Watts Rebellion. The sentiments of rawness, ingenuity, and uniqueness through the plethora of grim and robust hues offered at first sight of all of the sculptures shown in this study are indicative of the sharing of physical, emotional, and later on, artistic labor that goes into creating pieces of such magnitude. It becomes difficult to imagine the amounts of skill and thought used to forge such exemplary forms of art whose existence, this paper argues, embodies the emotional distraught felt by many African-Americans in Los Angeles: and many more African-American populations nationwide due to economic and social disregard by governmental powers.<sup>9</sup>

Noah Purifoy's influence reached further ends other than the multiple groundbreaking artistic achievements he is commonly praised for by historians. Purifoy and other influential artists of the 1960s were consistent in making their artistic efforts meet more than just the eye. The



culmination of Purifoy's path of healing (aside from his world-renown installations found in the Mojave) for Watts lies in the developments of the Watts Towers Arts Center as, "The Watts Towers Arts Center was one of the earliest venues that responded to the needs of Black artists in the city. The center was formed both to restore and preserve the magnificent folk art towers of Italian immigrant Simon Rodia and to promote the cultural life of the surrounding, majority African American community that had been at the center of the massive civil unrest of 1965."<sup>10</sup> The Watts Arts Center is identified in this paper as one of Purifoy's lasting impact and route to community healing through art combined with his artistic representations that elaborate the emotional spectrum of the Black artist in Watts. Becoming its founding director in 1964, Purifoy, dismembering the tension of white leadership since the foundation of the Watts Towers Cultural Center in 1962, helped complete many initiatives with the students of the organization: one being a significant clean-up project that was responsible for the gathering of the materials used in his art.<sup>11</sup> The examples set by Purifoy, through his era-defining art and organizational leadership, are what this paper considers to be one of the many avenues to a deep recovery from the Watts Rebellion's traumatic events as well as the ongoing trauma caused by relentless systemic racism in the United States. This vision of healing of the community through the actions of Watts Towers Art Center, foreshadowed by the efforts of Noah Purifoy and other artists of his stratosphere, is strengthened when mentioning the recent spikes in police violence toward Black bodies. Unchecked racial aggressions, the recent death of Breonna Taylor, and the violent social upheavals that rose throughout the United States' urban areas, as a result, reminded the world of the harsh disposition of African-Americans regarding racial constructs. The Watts Towers Art Center still holds significance to the healing patterns in Watts through artistic outlets as they

continue to organize projects for youth, community uplifting, and beautification. The Watts Towers Art Center, to this day, preserves the socially awakening characteristics developed by directors like Purifoy by continuing to elaborate on the previously mentioned emotional spectrum of African-Americans that live in an Anglo-elite dominated system.<sup>12</sup> Clear examples of this continuing legacy are seen at the 2015 exhibit curated by the current Center Director Rosie Lee Hooks and artist Michael Massenburg titled “50 Years and I Still Can’t Breathe,” which is discussed by historians like Paul Von Blum in an article labeled, “I Still Can’t Breathe”: Artists Decry Racism from the Watts Rebellion to the Present.” Blum’s survey of the socially political prominence of art that comes out of Black Los Angeles is essential to this colloquy as it encapsulates the footprints of Noah Purifoy’s work in establishing communal healing spaces through art.

This paper does not intend to ignore the fact that many 1960s African-American artists, poets, and cultural figures, were not accustomed to having the awareness that their identities were at the center of their cultural and artistic experiences.<sup>13</sup> Also, the idea of receptiveness of their art by a white audience did not resonate with many African-American artists in Los Angeles until artists like Noah Purifoy and the Watts Prophets came along and changed the dynamic into Black-favor.<sup>14</sup> The changing of this dynamic is what constitutes the avenues of healing for African-Americans in Los Angeles mentioned widely throughout this paper

## **Poetry**

When compiling research for a topic dealing with the linkages of generational healing developments through artistic outlets created out of ruin in 1965 by the African-American

community of Los Angeles, it is impossible not to mention the enormous endowments of the poetic conglomerate: The Watts Prophets. The founding members of the Watts Prophets, Anthony “Amde” Hamilton, Otis O’Solomon, and Richard Dedeaux, were diligent in leaving their mark in the world of Black art as well while taking a huge step forward into the field of social protest through poetry. Differing, only by nature of the composition, from the first example of art that provided routes to community healing for African-Americans in the 1960s, the Watts Prophets and their poetic contributions attribute to what many modern listeners refer to as spoken word poetry and even the early initiations rap music.<sup>15</sup> The Watts Prophets approach to musical delivery was articulate, staggering, and explicit compared to widely mainstream counterparts like The Whispers, who remained at the height of musical popularity in Watts during the 1960s.<sup>16</sup> Dr. Felicia Angeja Viator explains brilliantly in their thesis, *Gangster Boogie: Los Angeles and the Rise of Gangsta Rap, 1965–1992*, the formation of Los Angeles’ pride and joy in saying “that this uniquely provocative genre of hip-hop was forged by Los Angeles area youth as a tool for challenging civic authorities, asserting regional pride, and exploiting the nation’s growing fascination with the ghetto underworld. Those who fashioned themselves “gangsta rappers” harnessed what was markedly difficult about life in Black Los Angeles from the early 1970s through the Reagan Era—rising unemployment, project living, crime, violence, drugs, gangs, and the ever-increasing problem of police harassment—to create what would become the benchmark for contemporary hip-hop music.”<sup>17</sup> Though time-marking their discussion in the early 1970s, this claim by Viator is further strengthened through the presence of groups like the Watts Prophets whose contributions to the rise of the Los Angeles rap scene happened a few years prior. Repeatedly pointed out in this discussion are the

representations of combating societal discriminations perpetrated by the Anglo-elite power structures in Los Angeles. These representations, in the realm of Black art, are depicted in multiple facets while achieving similar public reactions; however, the approach of the Watts Prophets stands out as one worth noting toward the contribution of communal healing after the Watts Rebellion.

Listening to their debut album titled *The Black Voices: On the Streets of Watts* provides listeners with an explicit thrust of 1960s Black reality through expansive, rhythmic, and intensely articulated lyricism accompanied by improvisational instrumentation in the background. Receiving similarities of the social reception to Noah Purifoy's artistic manipulations, The Watts Prophets delivers savvy stanzas of social commentary in an urban swagger that captivates the audience with an immersive experience. As many may have looked at the constructions of Purifoy with vast curiosity, The Watts Prophets provide replicated wonder with smooth executions of poetic cleverness and vulgarity. Produced in 1969 and released on August 28, 1970, this twenty-one track compilation of slewed poetry titled, *The Black Voices: On the Streets of Watts*, remains exhibitionary to this paper as a source for Black artistic expressions of a necessity to organize, recognize, and socially mobilize within the parameters of an Anglo-elite power structure in Los Angeles. In the album lies a song titled "Saint America," that essentially sums up many accepted African-American perceptions of how an Anglo-elite power structure operated before and after the events of the Rebellion. In a swaying manner, the Watts prophets explain the Watts community's knowledge of their mistreatment by the governing forces of the United States and the acceptance of their disregard by the system they live within by stating, "We knew all the time, even when you denied it most strenuously, that

you had intestinal troubles. And then the Riots came: There you were, holy, pure, almost immaculate, but intentionally dishonest to the core. Dishonest to your young, your poor, your Blacks, to all of your people who are yearning to be free...” This opening line of a poem that personifies the Anglo-elite power structure that these artists work to combat are indicative of the experiences and emotions of African-Americans and other people of color that live under the democratic government of the United States. The “intestinal troubles” mentioned in this line refer to the outcry of impoverished communities from lack of resources, the pushback by communities for the sake of keeping Black people safe from the police and can also hint at the uneasiness caused by the overall presence of minority groups in Los Angeles. While discussing the teetering state of relations between African-Americans and the powers that be, the Watts Prophets continue to deliver healing messages of positivity surrounding the identity of Blackness upon their listeners through the seventeenth track of their album titled “Clowns All Around.” Metaphorical messages like, “Black is a race that endure the toughest and still come out the roughest,” and “Black is Malcolm, a dynamite mind!” would be pleasing to hear as an African-American person living through the parameters of a system that is designed for them to fail. The images provided in the positive statements shouted in “Clowns All Around” are identical to the images of soothing and healing of the community after the 1965 Rebellion constructed throughout this paper. Although there are some disagreeable sentiments toward femininity, sexuality, and drug-use, shouted out in many of the compositions by the Watts Prophets, their poetic efforts that come out of their debut album nonetheless streamlines the range of emotions felt by the Los Angeles Black community in regard to police activity (or inactivity), economic disadvantage, and social disregard.

Underneath the rambunctious, poetic flurries winded by the Watts Prophets was the necessity for organization of the community in order to bring about the changes they spoke on within their music. Developments of this drive by the Watts Prophets can be found when seeking deeply engrained community centers like the Watts Writers Workshop and the Mafundi Center (aka the Watts Happening Cultural Center). Being products of the Watts Writers Workshop, Hamilton, O'Solomon, and Dedeaux, knew all too well the importance of community organization, leadership, and accessibility to artistic outlets for the youth of the neighborhood. Practicing what they were proficient at preaching, the members of the Watts Prophets spoke out against and also witnessed the dismantling of their center due to a program sparked by the Federal Bureau of Investigation called COINTELPRO.<sup>18</sup> Initially being led by white members, the Watts Writers Workshop and its director "Hollywood screenwriter Budd Schulberg...approached the creation of the workshop through a cultural liberalism framework. In the words of Daniel Widener, proponents of cultural liberalism like Schulberg "held to a distinctive ideological viewpoint that conceived of expressive culture as providing what were variously de- scribed as nonviolent, communicative, and hopeful alternatives for frustrated urban youth otherwise susceptible to militant appeals."<sup>19</sup> This framework was scrutinized by the young members of the Watts Writers Workshop, being majority African-American, as they were familiar with COINTELPRO and the dismantling of many, especially prominent, militant Black associations. To clarify, historian Kevin Prescott Morris II states before beginning an interview with Anthony Hamilton of the Watts Prophets that, "The Watts Prophets witnessed the infiltration first-hand as the United States intelligence community planted FBI informant Dathard Perry (under the name Ed Riggs] in the Watts Writers Workshop. Perry's objectives involved sabotaging programs and eventually

burn down the building as a way to quell the movement-building that was taking place at the Workshop. Richard Dedeaux of the Watts Prophets recalled the memory of the Workshop being destroyed:

We were always a compassionate group at the Watts Writers Workshop. One day this bum [Perry, aka Riggs] came to the Workshop, all nasty and smelly, said he was hungry and shit. So we took up a collection and got him something to eat. He told us how he was down on his luck a little bit and asked us if he could stay at the Workshop a while. So we let him stay on the couch there. After a while, he became kind of like the keeper of the Workshop. But what it was, he was sent there by the FBI, part of the COINTELPRO thing. And so things started really happening, like all of a sudden one day a bunch of seats would get cut up in the Workshop. When we got ready to film things, the camera equipment worked, but things would break and we'd lose that. Some- times when mailing out flyers for our events, we'd find them in sewers, in the drains. So all kind of things, and we never once had any suspicion, until this guy got on Pacifica Radio and confessed."<sup>20</sup>

This moment, captured in an interview by Morris, defines moments of clarity for the multitude of organizations targeted and diminished by J. Edgar Hoover and the FBI in their COINTELPRO program. The existence of programs as such and the sentiments of organizations that target minority groups to hinder their advancement has been the reality for African-American people in Los Angeles for decades. However, harsh realizations like this did not stop the Watts Prophets as they pushed their journeys into gaining high poetic achievements and into more community-rooted programs like the Mafundi Center in Los Angeles. In an interview with Rita Cofield, a leading figure involving the preservation of the Mafundi Center, I learned more than what I needed to know about the Watts Prophets as well as Cofield's mission in collaboration with the conglomerate. Similar to the disbandment in the original Watts Writers Workshop, the building containing the Watts Happening Cultural Center (Mafundi Center) is currently in danger of being sold by the City of Los Angeles (sabotage of Black programs?). Rita Cofield is responsible and diligent in her work for the cause of having the Watts Happening

Cultural Center's building be labeled as a historical landmark. The city of Los Angeles provides almost thirty million dollars in grants for programs involving the arts, Cofield states that there should be as large of a fight to maintain this center but due to the racial histories in Los Angeles, it is frustrating, yet understandable. Her mission meets the intentions of this paper as she works to uphold the efforts of community building and healing established by the Watts Prophets after the Watts Rebellion. When speaking with Cofield, I was enlightened in the results of our conversation as well as the nature of our existence. We are both products out of Watts who hold our community close to our hearts and will spend our last day fighting to make sure that the sources that make our neighborhood feel like home, remain intact. The knowledge passed on from Cofield during the interview reinforced the purpose for creating this paper as their relationship with the Watts Prophets, an influential group who exercise the core argument of this paper, and their work in the field encompass the fact that artists who survived the Watts Rebellion brought forth new centers of healing through multiple facets of artistic interpretation.<sup>21</sup>

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this project's focus has pertained to the positive outcomes of the Watts Rebellion and to the historical realm of dispelling rebellions from perceived racial stereotypes. African-American artists are among the top contributors to art that America and many other countries hold near and dear. This project shows how many of these contributions were cultivated and nurtured out of rebellion for higher purposes other than social recognition. Most of all, the depictions of the Black art that emerged through the Watts Rebellion discussed in this paper segwayed the repairing of the Watts community through artistic and musical outlets.



Overall, this historical contribution is to be considered in light of the never-ending social turmoil experienced by African-Americans in Los Angeles. More importantly, the tradition of creating healing spaces through art continues on today. Many Los Angeles natives are familiar with the Annual Christmas Benefit Concert held by Anthony Tiffith's Top Dawg Entertainment. In an event where toys are donated to children for the holidays and LA's top artists come together to give a free show, we see the similarities to all of the cultural establishments made by the African-American figures discussed in this paper. This paper hopes to familiarize readers with the notion of presence like TDE's benefit concert as well as the initiatives that came before during a time of uprising.

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<sup>1</sup> Kelly Lytle Hernandez, *City of Inmates: Conquest, Rebellion, and the Rise of Human Caging in Los Angeles, v1771-1965*, 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Josh Sides, *L.A. City Limits: African American Los Angeles from the Great Depression to the Present* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

<sup>3</sup> Josh Sides, "Straight into Compton: American Dreams, Urban Nightmares, and the Metamorphosis of a Black Suburb," *American Quarterly* 56, no. 3 (2004): 583-605.

<sup>4</sup> Hernandez, *City of Inmates: Conquest, Rebellion, and the Rise of Human Caging in Los Angeles, v1771-1965*.

<sup>5</sup> Ruben Martínez, "Assembly Required: The Desert Cure," *Boom* 2, no. 2: (2012): 1-5. <https://doi.org/10.1525/boom.2012.2.2.1>.

<sup>6</sup> K.D. Rodriguez, *Watts Still Rising: Visualizing Watts's Past, Present and Future Through Public Art and Spatial Imaginaries*. <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/2q902551>.

<sup>7</sup> Rodriguez, *Watts Still Rising: Visualizing Watts's Past, Present and Future Through Public Art and Spatial Imaginaries*, 13.

<sup>8</sup> Paul von Blum, "Before and After Watts: Black Art in Los Angeles" in *Black Los Angeles: American Dreams and Racial Realities*. Edited by Hunt, Darnell M., and Ana-Christina. Ramón, (New York: New York University Press, 2010), 243-265.

<sup>9</sup> Molefi Kete Asante and Mambo Ama Mazama, 2004. *Encyclopedia of Black Studies*, (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2004), 476.

<sup>10</sup> Blum, "Before and After Watts: Black Art in Los Angeles" in *Black Los Angeles: American Dreams and Racial Realities*, (243-265).

<sup>11</sup> Richard Candida Smith, "Learning From Watts Towers: Assemblage and Community-Based Art In California." *Oral History* 37, no. 2 (2009): 51-58. Accessed December 10, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40650291>.

<sup>12</sup> Blum, 259.

<sup>13</sup> Asante and Mazama, *Encyclopedia of Black Studies*, 474.

<sup>14</sup> Asante and Mazama, *Encyclopedia of Black Studies*, 473.

<sup>15</sup> Kevin Prescott Morris II, *The South Central Soundscape: Understanding the Sounds of the Streets as Social Commentary in Postindustrial Los Angeles*, (2018). <http://libproxy.csudh.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.libproxy.csudh.edu/docview/2067436534?accountid=10347>.

<sup>16</sup> Scott Brown, "SOLAR: The History of the Sounds of Los Angeles Records," In *Black Los Angeles: American Dreams and Racial Realities*. Edited by Hunt, Darnell M., and Ana-Christina. Ramón, (New York: New York University Press, 2010), 266-282.

<sup>17</sup> F.A. Viator, *Gangster Boogie: Los Angeles and the Rise of Gangsta Rap, 1965–1992*, 2012. <http://libproxy.csudh.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.libproxy.csudh.edu/docview/1667442797?accountid=10347>.

<sup>18</sup> Morris, (2018). *The South Central Soundscape: Understanding the Sounds of the Streets as Social Commentary in Postindustrial Los Angeles*, 35.

<sup>19</sup> Morris, (2018). *The South Central Soundscape: Understanding the Sounds of the Streets as Social Commentary in Postindustrial Los Angeles*, 40.

<sup>20</sup> Morris, (2018). *The South Central Soundscape: Understanding the Sounds of the Streets as Social Commentary in Postindustrial Los Angeles*, 41.

<sup>21</sup> Cofield, Rita, telephone interview with the author (Edgar Bouligny III), November 19th, 2020.

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