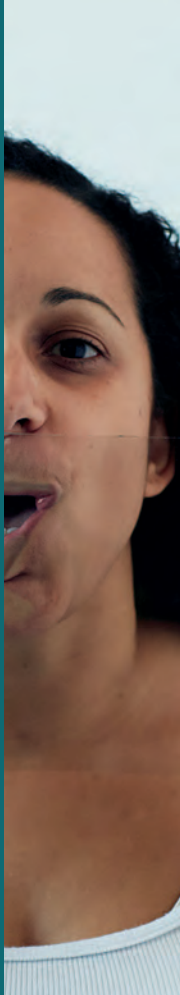




Clarke



DeFreitas



McGilchrist

# facevalue

Curated by  
Heidi McKenzie



# face<sub>value</sub>

Exploring Mixed-Race Identity Through the Works of  
Jordan Clarke, Erika DeFreitas and Olivia McGilchrist

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Exhibition Curated by  
Heidi McKenzie

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Jordan Clarke, Erika DeFreitas and Olivia McGilchrist.  
Exhibition curated by Heidi McKenzie.

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*“Can there ever be an absolute congruence of understanding between the person being seen and the person doing the seeing?”*



# The Inter-Subjectivity of Mixed-Race Identity in the Exhibition *Face Value*

by Heidi McKenzie

The exhibition *Face Value* explores the complexities of mixed-race identity through the works of Jordan Clarke, Erika DeFreitas and Olivia McGilchrist. These artists engage in self-portraiture and deploy the mask as a trope in order to narrate their experiences as women of mixed Caribbean/European heritage. The central premise of this exhibition is the notion of inter-subjectivity – the shared interplay between two individuals’ experiential worlds. As it pertains to the mixed-race artist, performance theorist Diana Taylor describes inter-subjectivity as a double-coded neither/nor subjectivity.<sup>1</sup> The artists’ use of the mask underscores this double-play of subjectivity. As a focal point, the mask facilitates the artists’ self-reflexive inquiry that embodies, interrogates, and performs mixed-race in order to destabilize racialized stereotypes. The use of masks, both literally and metaphorically, challenges society’s ideas of who these women might be, at face value.

Implicit in the exhibition are the following questions: can there ever be an absolute congruence of understanding between the person being seen and the person doing the seeing? And, does the way someone appears accurately reflect that person’s identity within a biracial or mixed-race context? Each artist’s response is contingent upon her unique cultural background and upbringing.

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<sup>1</sup> Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*, (London: Duke University Press, 2003) 96.

**Jordan Clarke** is a visual artist of Bajan-Canadian heritage whose self-portraits documented a three-year process in which she produced paintings that represent herself in relation to her understanding of how others perceive the way she looks. Her use of masks both affirms her own sense of identity and challenges the way others see her as neither black nor white, but ‘something in between.’

**Erika DeFreitas** is a conceptual artist of Guyanese-Portuguese and Afro-Trinidadian heritage who uses language, photography and gesture to subvert racial categorization. Her series of nine self-portraits enunciate Zora Neale Hurston’s phrase “I am not tragically colored.”<sup>2</sup> DeFreitas distorts these words by pressing her mouth against a plexiglass barrier. The resulting gestures symbolize a struggle between language and its embodiment, racial preconceptions and self-determination.

**Olivia McGilchrist** is a photographer and video artist of French and Jamaican-Swiss heritage who relocated from London, England to her grandfather’s home in Kingston, Jamaica in 2011. McGilchrist’s photography and video installation focus on her sense of identity as a white woman born in Jamaica after recently discovering that her family has African ancestry. Embedding herself in the Jamaican landscape to evoke the ghosts of this unknown lineage, McGilchrist questions her complicity in the ongoing inequities of her native country.

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<sup>2</sup> Zora Neale Hurston, “How It Feels to Be Colored Me,” in *I Love Myself When I Am Laughing...and Then Again When I Am Looking Mean and Impressive: A Zora Neale Hurston Reader*, ed. Alice Walker, (New York: Feminist Press CUNY, 1979) 153-155.



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*I initially thought of the mask as a superficial layer of identity - something that can be placed on me by others. I wanted to be seen a specific way, I wanted to be black, full black. Now I have mixed feelings, I'm kind of almost proudly stating that I'm mixed-race but at the same time saying that I am just something in between, whatever that is, I'm not sure. In the end, I leave my uncertainty behind and remove the masks altogether.*

*Jordan Clarke*

Jordan Clarke performs her understanding of self through the media of painting. The three paintings in the exhibition, *Nothing is Just Black or White* (2008), *White Façade* (2010), and *Something in Between* (2011) are drawn from a fourteen-part series of that span the time period from the earliest to the latest works in the series. These self-portraits mirror and invert philosopher and psychiatrist Franz Fanon's figurative use of the mask as articulated in *Black Skin, White Masks*.<sup>3</sup> As a person of mixed race himself, Fanon interprets identity to be both dependent on, and to exceed, face value. The interchangeability between white

<sup>3</sup> Franz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, originally published in 1952 (New York, Grove Press, 1967).

and black masks in Clarke's series speaks to the equivocality of her internalized awareness of how she is perceived by others in relation to her sense of self as a black woman. The landscape for this awareness invariably shifts dependent on the social context; Clarke processes her journey within her changing milieus, and communicates her identity to the viewer through her self-portraits.

Clarke created *Nothing is Just Black or White* in response to a call to participate in a Caribbean-Canadian exhibition based on the theme of mask. In this painting, the artist's pose is casual; legs half-crossed, she assumes a direct, full frontal and seated posture on a nondescript brown fabric set against a lighter backdrop. She leans back, resting her body weight on both hands behind her. She wears a simple white tank top and green shorts. Her shoulder-length, tightly curled hair is loose and extends to either side of her body in its fullness.

Having no direct cultural or experiential ties to the Caribbean annual festival of Carnival that celebrates cultural identity largely through the use of mask and masquerade, Clarke responds viscerally to the theme of the mask by illustrating it in a literal way: she paints a black mask onto the surface of her face, almost as if it were blackface make-up applied directly onto her skin. This allusion, whether conscious or unconscious, has the potential to infer an interpretation of the work that relates to the racist historical practice of the

minstrel or vaudeville show that was prevalent in the Americas up until the mid to late 20th century. In this practice, the white man painted a black mask on his face with coal, grease or shoe-polish as a caricature of the stereotypical ‘happy-go-lucky darky of the slave plantation.’<sup>4</sup> In Clarke’s application of a blackened face, there is no exaggerated minstrel’s grin that attenuates her proximity to the reference. Her expression is serious in tone, at once defiant and defeated.

*Nothing is Just Black or White* represents Clarke’s first attempt to address what Chicana cultural theorist Gloria Anzaldúa terms *un choque*, or cultural collision, caused by the coming together of “two self-consistent but habitually incompatible frames of reference.”<sup>5</sup> For Clarke, this choque began early in her childhood. She was raised as a single child, her Bajan-Canadian father absent from an early age. Her mother, several generations white Canadian, made concerted efforts to provide opportunities for her daughter to engage with her Bajan roots. Clarke considers that she has always ‘looked’ mixed-race. As a consequence, she found that she was not accepted in the black community, nor was she able to claim her identity as ‘black’ within her predominantly white family

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<sup>4</sup> Lewis A. Erenberg, *Steppin’ Out New York Nightlife and the Transformation of American Culture, 1890-1930*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984) 73.

<sup>5</sup> Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera* (San Francisco: spinsters/aunt lute, 1987).



***Nothing is Just Black or White***

2008

Oil on canvas, 30" x 40"

and peer-group. In high school, she was excluded from Black History Month events on the basis of not being ‘black enough.’ Consequently, much of Clarke’s adolescence was devoted to negotiating her identity, or as she puts it, “dancing between two worlds.”



In the painting *White Façade*, Clarke wears a white mask and dances between her two worlds. Here again, the mask is depicted as if it were make-up applied directly to her face. She paints herself from the waist up, standing with her arms crossed, elbows clasped on either side, clutching her bosom and partially revealing cleavage under a scant black spaghetti-strap tank top. The backdrop is neutral in mottled, beige tones that capture the shadow of her body in the bottom half of the painting. Her expression is sombre, and she turns her head at an angle to the left and looks up and off into the distance.

The overall effect is a jarring inversion of the previous work, *Nothing is Just Black or White*. According to Clarke, the white mask in *White Façade* speaks to her feeling that some people in the black community attempt to “superimpose” whiteness on her. It also references the term ‘white-washing,’ which is used to describe a minority person who has assimilated within white western society, or who tries to ‘act white.’ Clarke perceives both the prescriptive term, white-washing, and the figurative masking of black face as derogatory and hurtful. In this painting, she cannot meet her viewers’ gaze face-on.

***White Façade***

2010

Oil on canvas, 18" x 24"

The third painting in the exhibition, *Something in Between*, graphically depicts the artist's view of the push/pull of her two worlds: the white and the black masks symbolize how these worlds collide yet never seem to fuse together. One of the later works to be completed in the series, *Something in Between* was created after the first two works in the exhibition. Clarke paints three versions of herself: in white mask, eyes closed, arms folded on the left; in black mask on the right, eyes fixed straight ahead at ninety degrees, with her hands on her hips; and unmasked in the centre, looking out and holding her hands behind her back. She positions 'her-selves' standing shoulder-to-shoulder and back-to-back with each other. The partial views reveal two thirds of the three selves from just below the hips. The work is painted on an ochre orange backdrop and the bodies themselves seem to be roughly sketched in with the detail of colour absent from the picture and only apparent in the masks themselves. The self-image portrayed in the middle of the two masked selves gazes directly at the viewer. This regard implies an affective resolution: the artist's determined stance appears to project confrontational scrutiny. In this instance the artist returns the viewers' proverbial gaze, and asks them to acknowledge what they might find uncomfortable to admit – that there is a form of 'racial voyeurism' that can take place in the everyday first impression of an anonymous visual encounter.



***Something in Between***

2011

Oil on canvas, 30" x 36"

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*For the most part, I see my use of the term 'tragically' to be sarcastic...in the sense that there is no tragedy in my skin colour/race/presence. In fact I am very proud of who I am and my ancestors. I see it to be tragic that there are those out there who deem my skin colour/race/presence to be tragic.*

*Erika DeFreitas*

Whereas Clarke uses the mask in both a literal and figurative way to highlight the dynamics of inter-subjectivity, DeFreitas' mask is imagined. In her work, *I Am Not Tragically Colored* (after Zora Neale Hurston), nine framed photographs of the artist are hung in the gallery adjacent to one another. Each self-portrait denotes one syllable of the phrase inspired by American anthropologist, Zora Neale Hurston, "I am not tragically colored." In every image the artist is holding a 7" x 5" piece of plexiglass over her mouth and pressing her lips into the glass as she mouths the words of the phrase. The photographs are printed larger than life, 20" x 30" in order to emphasize the consequent degree of distortion in the subject's face. Installed, the work spans just over twenty linear feet. Facing frontally,

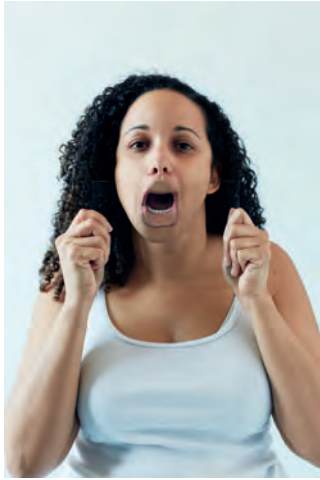
DeFreitas commands the viewer's gaze directly. As in Clarke's work, the artist's stance is intended to be confrontational.

She is wearing a simple white tank top. Her long curly hair falls loosely over her shoulders. The image captures her from just above the waist on a blue-white background. Under each of the framed portraits, an 8" x 5" plexiglass is mounted with the corresponding syllable etched onto its surface. The lettering is etched in Times New Roman – a common and unscripted serif font. The effect of the etching on the plexiglass produces white lettering on a transparent surface. The use of white is specific in both form and function: the white on a clear background makes the words difficult to read at a distance, thus requiring the viewer to consider the work at close range in order to decode the truncated syllables.

The dichotomy between absence and presence is a central and recurring theme in DeFreitas' work. While the text infers absence through negation (I am not tragically colored), the emphasis on gesture affirms presence. The text signals to the viewers what not to assume about the artist, whereas the exaggerated nature of the artist's performative acts in the photographs invite viewers to draw their own conclusions about the subject they see before them. In the artist's words, "the glass is not a barrier, it is a vehicle for enunciation. It's almost as if I'm trying to scream the statement visually."



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***I am not tragically colored (after Zora Neale Hurston),***

2013-2014

Archival digital prints 20" x 30" each; plexiglass 5" x 8" each

(This is a graphic representation of the work and a mock-up of the text,  
not actual photography of the etched plexiglass plates)

The physicality of this act impedes the delivery of the phrase to its intended audience, while at the same time heightening the performative role of gesture over text. The text is drawn from Hurston's autobiography:

*I am not tragically colored. There is no great sorrow dammed up in my soul, nor lurking behind my eyes. I do not mind at all. I do not belong to the sobbing school of Negrohood who hold that nature somehow has given them a lowdown dirty deal and whose feelings are all hurt about it. Even in the helter-skelter skirmish that is my life, I have seen that the world is to the strong regardless of a little pigmentation more or less. No, I do not weep at the world—I am too busy sharpening my oyster knife.<sup>6</sup>*

<sup>6</sup> Hurston, 153-155.

Hurston's citation affirms the author's sense of dignity and pride. DeFreitas' work mirrors its unapologetic nature: both women declare their worth to be equal to any other human being regardless of race or skin-tone. Notably, DeFreitas does not ascribe to Hurston's worldview of the "sobbing school of Negrohood" and notes that this can and continues to be interpreted as insulting or demeaning to many. At a conceptual level, the artist is interested in disrupting her viewers' preconceived notions about race. She draws inspiration from black feminist theorist bell hooks' assertion that "our words are not without meaning. They are an action – a resistance."<sup>7</sup> By claiming the largest place of uninterrupted wall space in the gallery, DeFreitas claims her space and frames her body, thereby asserting her voice.

By focusing on race as a social construct, the artist invites her viewers to grapple with a corollary notion – that skin-colour, and the various gradations of skin-tone between black and white, are meaningless criteria for assessing an individual's worth or intrinsic value. In her words, "I am the embodiment of the blurring of the boundaries of the two binaries of race. I am that physical reminder that these essentialist notions we tend to have of race aren't true."

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<sup>7</sup> bell hooks, *Talking Back: thinking feminist, thinking black*, (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1988) 28.

DeFreitas' answer to the question of congruence between the person being seen and the one actively doing the looking suggests that it is impossible to pinpoint a definitive response. She sets up a deliberate shift in the inter-subjectivity of her work in relation to the viewer by complicating the dynamic between her self-representation and the way she may be understood. While it may be tempting to interpret the plexiglass as the conceptual mask, DeFreitas asks the viewer to consider that words themselves are the mask that can hide, cover, and alter the way she is perceived. As a consequence of the primacy of gesture over text, the viewers' affective response becomes disoriented, and the work in its totality disables the viewer's ability to 'fix' DeFreitas' race. When the work is considered as a whole, ultimately the mask – conceptual or imagined – recedes: through the work, DeFreitas calls upon her viewers to see beyond the 'tragedy' of her colour and embrace who she is beyond face value.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> The term 'face value' is generally associated with the financial industry. It defines the parameters of the value printed on the face of a stock, bond or other financial instrument. In the context of this essay it is used as an idiom to infer the apparent value as opposed to real worth of something or someone.





*At face value I'm a white female. When I discovered that I had a great grandmother that was black – it caused me to rethink my Caribbean identity...If I was in another non-white dominant part of the world, I'd feel the same, but here I feel infinitely connected to the land and the sea and the history – the primordial thing that bothers me is the very clear history: we come here, take over, dominate, and you still have to suffer for however long to get over all of this horror.*

*Olivia McGilchrist*

While both Clarke and DeFreitas were born in Toronto and identify as biracial, McGilchrist identifies as a white woman of mixed Caribbean and European heritage. She 'reads' white, and her self-understanding was constructed as a white woman. Her mother is French, and her father was light-skinned Jamaican and presumably mixed, though never acknowledged as such by the family. McGilchrist left Jamaica at the age of three, and spent her formative years in France and the United Kingdom. In 2011, at the age of thirty, she returned to Jamaica and took possession of her grandfather's house in Kingston. It was there that she discovered a family portrait in the closet that

depicts her paternal great-grandfather with a black or partly black partner and their three children.

With no living relatives on her father's side with whom to confirm the family's lineage, McGilchrist traced her great grandmother's name through the national archives. While there is a possibility that the photograph may be that of an 'unofficial family,' the artist believes that the discovered photograph depicts Ernestine, the woman whose name is documented in the registry. The discovery of this picture has proven to have a catalyzing effect on McGilchrist and has propelled the artist to 'trouble' her identity through her art. A copy of the found photograph, exhibited for the first time in *Face Value*, provides the backdrop for the 10-minute video installation, *Ernestine and Me* (2012), that is showcased in the exhibition.

In each of McGilchrist's works presented in *Face Value*, she stages herself as a cultural object by virtue of the fact that she is photographed wearing a white mask. Devoid of embellishment, the mask disallows a reading of her facial expressions. Through the masking, she highlights the various postural gestures communicated through the body in order to perform her identity. She names the character she becomes by placing the mask over her face to become Whitey. Whitey is a character that was born out of the artist's move back to Jamaica. Upon her arrival, the local population started calling her for what they



### **The McGilchrists**

circa 1910, Kingston, Jamaica

Archival inkjet print, from scan of the original image, 6" x 8"

(from top, anti-clockwise: Ernestine, Meyrick, James, Willoughby, Monica)

took her to be on the street at face value. Her nickname became her alter ego and a crucial tool in her exploration and her process of becoming. By donning the mask, McGilchrist becomes an actor, performing her story and at once altering the dynamic of inter-subjectivity between herself and the viewer. Although not readily apparent, this is achieved through the historic allusion to the early 19th-century John Canoe (or Jonkonnu). Jonkonnu was a black male actor who dressed in a

white mask and paraded about town in parody of his plantation owner for one day of the year. This ritual has morphed into modern-day Carnival or Mardi Gras in the Caribbean and American South. McGilchrist's willful appropriation of the slaves' ritual is intended to provoke and unsettle normative discourse around the African slave trade and power dynamics between the white settler and the black slave.

**(whitey) *Discovery Bay*,**

2013

Archival canvas print,  
84" x 59", edition of 1



In *(whitey) Discovery Bay* (2013), the artist stands on the prow of a red fishing boat that is anchored close to shore, in the full sun of the Caribbean sea. She wears Whitey's white mask, and a plain black evening dress. The skyscape's volatility is matched by the intensity of the azure seascape. *(whitey) Discovery Bay* is an 84" x 59" photograph printed on canvas. The image is steeped in metaphor: the setting is Discovery Bay,

where Christopher Columbus arrived in Jamaica in 1494. McGilchrist invokes the violence of the Middle Passage, the slave trade and Britain's colonization. The viewers are being asked to see themselves as implicated in colonial fantasies, a device, according to theorist Diana Taylor, that is central to the performative role of the non-white racialized artist.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Taylor, 86.



### ***Ernestine and Me***

2012

Still images from 10:00 min video, from the installation *Ernestine and Me*.

Sound credits: appropriated Jamaican classics, re-mixed by Andrew Unknownz, at Hands and Hearts studio, Kingston, Jamaica. All owners retain copyright to their respective works.



### ***Beauty Beach***

2012

from the installation *Ernestine and Me*  
archival print, 29" x 20", edition of 3



### ***Bamboo Avenue***

2012

from the installation *Ernestine and Me*  
archival print, 29" x 20", edition of 3



### ***White River***

2012

from the installation *Ernestine and Me*  
archival print, 29" x 20", edition of 3

The disjuncture here is that McGilchrist is not racialized. She is mixed –both colonizer and colonized, and yet neither at the same time. By placing herself in this specific setting –as a white woman arriving on a boat, wearing a white mask, and evoking a colonial context– McGilchrist disrupts the expected racial and gender typecasting in the tableau. As a consequence, she heightens the subjectivity of her own whiteness.

In the 10-minute video installation, *Ernestine and Me*, close-ups of the found family portrait literally frame McGilchrist’s portrayal of herself in relation to a series of contemporary Jamaicans from a variety of racial and social backgrounds. The cast of locals in the video encircle Whitey: they mock, probe and examine the character as a cultural object. Through these performative acts, the artist calls into question her own privilege ascribed to her by virtue of her white skin.

She also asks her viewers to consider themselves as possible characters in the scenario being played out, and experience what they might feel, assume, or presume in response to her appearance within the context of her Jamaican identity.

The work as a multi-media installation includes three ‘frozen poses’ of McGilchrist and a local Jamaican in contemporary garb, set against the pixelated backdrop of three 1950s Jamaican postcards: *Beauty Beach*, *Bamboo Avenue*, and *White River*. In these supplementary images, the artist entangles the ideas of whiteness, the mask, nostalgia and the idealized public imaginary of Jamaica’s tourist-driven economy. She pits this recent historic perspective against the purportedly more harsh reality of contemporary Jamaica, fraught with its difficult inter-racial dynamics and economic disparity.

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All three artists in *Face Value* perform and affirm the complexity of representation of mixed Caribbean and European cultural and ethnic heritage by plumbing the resonances of their inter-subjectivity through self-portraiture. The art, as storytelling, comprises each artist's locus of enunciation as empowered thirty-something year-old women who refuse the mask of race. Through their innovative yet provocative use of the mask, each artist manages to more fully engage the viewers' active interpretation of their narrative. Their art, whether painting, photography or video installation, challenges the premise of the 'neither/nor double-coded subjectivity' of mixed-race. As viewers, we begin to see, hear and understand who they feel they are on their terms, not ours.

All of the quotes or citations attributed to the exhibiting artists are from research interviews conducted by the author in October, 2013; from email correspondence with the author; or from the panel presentations on February 22, 2014 from the OCAD University conference, *The State of Blackness: From Production to Presentation* at Harbourfront Centre in which Erika DeFreitas and Olivia McGilchrist participated.

## List of Works

Jordan Clarke, b. 1984, Toronto, Canada

*Something in Between*, 2011

oil on canvas, 30" x 36"

*White Façade*, 2010

oil on canvas, 18" x 24"

*Nothing is Just Black or White*, 2008

oil on canvas, 30" x 40"

Erika DeFreitas, b. 1980, Toronto, Canada

*I am not tragically colored (after Zora Neale Hurston)*, 2013-2014

archival digital prints 20" x 30" each; plexiglass 5" x 8" each

Olivia McGilchrist, b. 1981, Kingston, Jamaica

*The McGilchrists*, circa 1910, Kingston, Jamaica

archival inkjet print, from scan of the original image, 6" x 8"

*(whitey) Discovery Bay*, 2013

archival canvas print, 84" x 59", edition of 1

*Ernestine and Me*, 2012

10:00 min video, from the installation *Ernestine and Me*

*Beauty Beach, Bamboo Avenue, White River*, 2012

from the installation *Ernestine and Me*

archival prints, 29" x 20", edition of 3

# face value

Jordan Clarke, b. 1984, Toronto, Canada  
Erika DeFreitas, b. 1980, Toronto, Canada  
Olivia McGilchrist, b. 1983, Kingston, Jamaica

The exhibition *face value* explores the complexities of mixed-race identity described by theorist Diana Taylor as "the destabilized, neither-white/ neither-black." The three artists featured in the exhibition engage in self-portraiture to furnish their representation of being women of mixed Caribbean-European heritage in the artist's world. The work is the focal point of an ongoing inquiry, one that embraces, interrogates, and performs mixed-race in order to destabilize racialized categories. The artist's use of masks - both literally and metaphorical - challenge society's idea of who these women might be, at face value.

Jordan Clarke's self-portraits span a three-year process in which the painter explores that represents herself in relation to her understanding of how others perceive the way she looks. Her use of masks both allows her own sense of identity and challenges the way others see her as neither black nor white, but something in between.

Erika DeFreitas uses language to address racial categorization. Her series of two-dimensional self-portraits emulate the American anthropologist Zora Neale Hurston's phrase: "I am not magically colored." DeFreitas distorts these words by putting her mouth against a pleasurable humor. The resulting gestures establish a struggle between language and its embodiment, racial perceptions, and self-identification.

Olivia McGilchrist's photographs and video installation focus on her sense of identity as a white woman born in Jamaica who has recently discovered that her family has African ancestry. Embedding herself in the Jamaican fabric gives rise to the question of this unknown lineage. McGilchrist questions her complexion in the ongoing construction of her native country.

Jessie McKenzie, Curator

















## Jordan Clarke

Featured Artist

Jordan Clarke is a Toronto based artist. In addition to appearing in solo and group exhibitions in Ontario and abroad, Jordan's art has been published in the anthology *Other Tongues: Mixed-Race Women Speak Out*, edited by Adebé DeRango-Adem and Andrea Thompson. Another of her paintings provided the cover art for *A Many-Splendored Thing*, poems by Peter Austin. Jordan is a member of 3MW (Three Mixed Women), a collective of three mixed-race artists. She is also a recipient of funding from the Ontario Arts Council. In 2008, Jordan studied at the Academy of Realist Art in Toronto, completing the Drawing curriculum. In 2007, she graduated from the Ontario College of Art and Design, receiving a BFA. While attending OCAD, she was fortunate enough to participate in the off-campus studies program in Florence, Italy, 2005-2006. [www.jordanclarke.ca](http://www.jordanclarke.ca)



## Erika DeFreitas

Featured Artist

Erika DeFreitas' artistic practice explores the influence of language, loss and culture on the formation of identity through performance, relational exchanges, photographic documentation and textile-based works. DeFreitas is a graduate of the MFA program in Visual Studies at the University of Toronto and has exhibited projects in artist-run centres in Canada and the United States. Recent and upcoming exhibition sites include Gallery TPW, A Space Gallery, Gallery 44, Propeller Centre for Visual Arts in Toronto, the Houston Museum of African American Culture, performances with the 7a\*11d International Festival of Performance Art, and a residency at Mentoring Artists for Women's Art (MAWA) in Winnipeg. [www.erikadefreitas.com](http://www.erikadefreitas.com)

Erika DeFreitas would like to acknowledge the support of the Ontario Arts Council's Exhibition Assistance Program.



## Olivia McGilchrist

Featured Artist

**Olivia McGilchrist** is a Jamaican-French visual artist who troubles her post-colonial white Creole female identity by remapping it within the tropical picturesque through photographs, performances and multi-layered videos. Born in Kingston, Jamaica to a French mother and a Jamaican father, she grew up in France and was educated in the UK. In 2010 she completed her Master's in Photography at the London College of Communications and, in 2011, she returned to Kingston to work at the National Gallery of Jamaica (NGJ) and lecture in Photography and New Media at the Edna Manley College of the Visual and Performing Arts. Her work has been shown in Jamaica, Trinidad, Barbados, Grenada, Brazil, the U.S., the U.K., and France. Most recently she won the Trinidad & Tobago film festival and ARC Magazine New Media Prize. [www.oliviamcgilchrist.com](http://www.oliviamcgilchrist.com)



## Heidi McKenzie

Curator

**Heidi McKenzie** is a Toronto-based ceramic artist, arts journalist and curator. She has over twenty years experience as a manager and producer in the not-for-profit arts broadcasting sectors and holds an MA in Comparative European Cultural Policy (Warwick 1994). Her sculpture practice often incorporates notions of her biracial Indo-Trinidadian and Irish heritage. Her art embodies the performance of her cultural identity where her whiteness is erased by the part of her that is South Asian. She has presented her work in relation to body and race with *Subtle Technologies*, *TechnoScience Salon*, Toronto International Art Fair (2012) *Race in the Americas* in Birmingham, UK, (2013), and *Cluj International Ceramics Biennale*, Romania. In 2011 she was awarded an Untapped Emerging Artist Award by the Toronto Artist Project. *Face Value* coincided with The State of Blackness conference, for which McKenzie was the Project Coordinator. *Face Value* is her debut solo curatorial exhibition and a component of her MFA in Criticism and Curatorial Practice at OCAD University. [www.heidimckenzie.ca](http://www.heidimckenzie.ca)

## Acknowledgements

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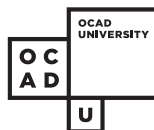
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### Exhibition Partners:

Dr. Kenneth Montague of Wedge Curatorial Projects







*“Face Value, curated by Heidi McKenzie for Gallery 1313, doesn’t provide any easy answers but, with its focus on mixed-race identity, ‘destabilizes racialized stereotypes’ to move beyond the binaries of yesteryear into the shifting sands of today.”*

Terence Dick, on *Akimblog* for Akimbo.ca,  
February 25, 2014

face<sub>value</sub>