

# DAS MAGAZIN

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Thornton Dial, Ground Zero: Decorating the Eye (2002), Courtesy of Private Collection, New York, Promised Gift to the Whitney Museum of American Art

*Nothing against Warhol and Richter — but why is it so rare to see African American artists in the museum like these paintings by Thornton Dial?*

## MUSEUMMAMMY

A column by Hans Ulrich Obrist

When Kimberly Drew began studying art history in her hometown of New York, she soon realized that something was missing. Because the artists she was supposed to study were all white. That, she thought, couldn't be. So she made the decision to give African American artists such as Jack Whitten or Kerry James Marshall the place in art history they deserve.

While still studying, she started the blog “Black Contemporary Art,” on which she presented black artists to the public almost every hour. Of course, she was not the only one with the goal of making black artists more visible. Thelma Golden, director of the great Studio Museum in Harlem, which is primarily dedicated to African American artists, and where Drew did an internship, was an important mentor.

Drew describes her life path--she was born in 1990--in her book “This is What I Know About Art”, a slender, accessible volume that hit like a bomb in the United States and was already sold out after a few days after it was published. Drew also tells of an experience with her mother while visiting the Whitney Museum in New York. When her mother told her that she hadn’t been to a museum in 20 years, it was a shock to her: it signaled to her that the museums are a place of white culture for large parts of the black population.

Therefore, on Instagram under the name @museummammy, she started posting all works of African American artists she could find in museums, exhibition spaces, and galleries in New York. The enormous response from her now 289,000 followers earned her the job of social media representative for the Metropolitan Museum, one of the largest museums in the world.

In the meantime, she has earned an international reputation as an activist who pursues her mission with boundless energy, and with a goal in mind that she is passionate about. Her book ends with the words of the African American artist Thornton Dial:

If there is one thing you can do, do it for someone else. Work for someone else’s freedom, for someone else’s child.

Hans Ulrich Obrist is artistic director of the Serpentine Galleries in London.