

Artist Resources – Glenn Ligon (American, b. 1960)

[Ligon artist website](#)

[Ligon on Art21](#)

[Ligon at MoMA](#)

[Ligon at Hauser & Wirth](#)

[Ligon at Regen Projects](#)



Ligon, 2018
Photograph: Scott J. Ross

In 1996, [Glenn Ligon: New Work](#) was on display at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. [Glenn Ligon: Unbecoming](#) was on display two years later at the Institute of Contemporary Art Philadelphia, tracing his career to that date and featuring some of his iconic work such as the “I AM A MAN” painting.

Read a 2009 interview with Jason Moran published in [Interview Magazine](#).

Glenn Ligon: AMERICA was the first comprehensive mid-career retrospective of Ligon’s work. The exhibition was launched in 2011 by the [Whitney Museum of American Art](#) and additionally traveled to both the [Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth](#) and the [Los Angeles County Museum of Art](#). Read reviews in [Artforum](#) and [Hyperallergic](#).

In 2014, [Glenn Ligon: Narratives \(Disembark\) Suite](#) was on display at Gettysburg College, featuring nine lithographs gifted to the college in 1979.

Glenn Ligon: Encounters and Collisions was co-organized by the [Tate Liverpool](#) and [Nottingham Contemporary](#), bringing together artworks and other materials that inspire his practice.

Ligon curated the exhibition [Blue Black](#) at the Pulitzer Arts Foundation inspired by works featuring those two colors in the collection. Read a review in the [New York Times](#).

The Musée d’Orsay installed the exhibition [Some Black Parisians: Glenn Ligon](#) in 2019, featuring 12 large-scale neon works inspired by 19th and 20th century French models, performers, and writers.

Watch an [interview](#) with the artist and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts upon their acquisition of *A Small Band* and an [artist talk](#) given at the Menil Collection when they acquired *Untitled (Orpheus and Eurydice)*.

Read an extensive profile on Ligon in the [New York Times Style Magazine](#) by Megan O’Grady and an interview with Raphael Rubenstein in the [Brooklyn Rail](#), both published in 2021.

From 2022 to 2024, *Glenn Ligon: From the Collections of Jordan D. Schnitzer and His Family Foundation* traveled nationally to the [Bellevue Arts Museum](#), [UC Santa Cruz Institute of the Arts and Sciences](#), and the [JSMA](#).

[Glenn Ligon: All Over The Place](#) was installed at the Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge in 2024, pairing the artist’s work with his own interventions into the museum’s galleries.



Ligon working on *Study for Negro Sunshine*, 2012
Still from film, Art 21

Glenn Ligon (American, b. 1960)

Untitled (I Feel Most Colored When I Am Thrown Against a Sharp White Background), 1990

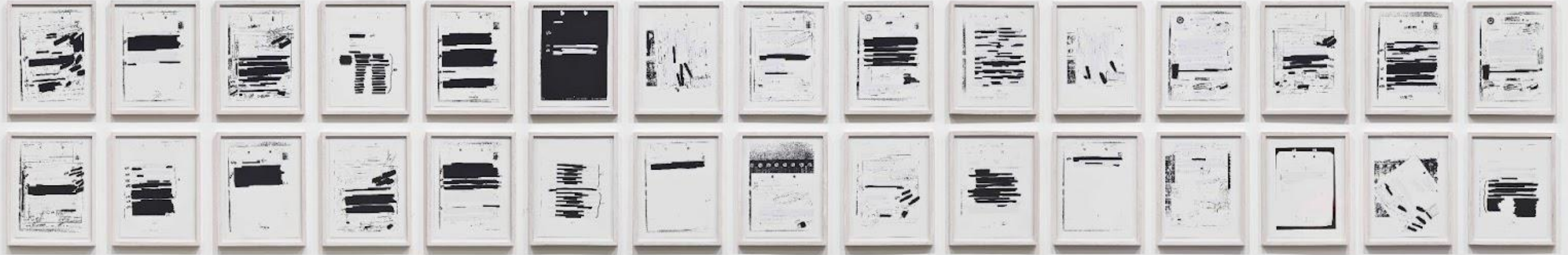
Oil stick, gesso, and graphite on panel

Private Collection; L2025:62.3

Glenn Ligon is one of the most influential American artists of his generation. Born and raised in New York, Ligon began his career as an abstract painter but began to incorporate text into his work in the 1980s. **Untitled (I Feel Most Colored When I Am Thrown Against a Sharp White Background)** is inspired by a 1928 essay by Zora Neale Hurston entitled “How It Feels to Be Colored Me.” The oil stick becomes smudged and smeared as the phrase repeats, and the artist was interested in this disappearance of language. As he says: “I became really fascinated by those sentences that had the word “I” in them.... Is it the “I” of the text that I’m quoting, or is it “I,” Glenn Ligon, feel most colored?”

On view November 12, 2025 – February 20, 2026





Glenn Ligon (American, b. 1960)

FOIA drawings, 2011

30 silkscreens, mixed medium on paper

Collection of Lizzie and Steve Blatt; L2024:2.1

Born and raised in New York, Glenn Ligon started his career as an abstract painter but began to incorporate words and text into his work in the 1980s. He is one of the most widely exhibited and influential American artists working today on the national and international level. His pointed use of phrases, jokes, and quotes direct attention to sociopolitical issues, racial, and sexual identities in the United States. These **FOIA drawings** utilize declassified FBI documents on the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Black Panthers made available through the Freedom of Information Act. However, Ligon's intervention of "whiting" out available information and leaving the redacted marks points to the censorship and surveillance of the Civil Rights Movement. According to the artist: "The documents are now available to the public, but the things that were deemed secret are still secret.... It's interesting when you think of the lengths power goes to keep people in check, but also the fear behind that impulse."

On view April 25 – July 28, 2024