

JORDAN SCHNITZER **MUSEUM OF ART**



Carrie Mae Weems
THE USUAL SUSPECTS

TEACHING RESOURCE GUIDE

Carrie Mae Weems (American, b. 1953), 2016. **All the Boys (Profile 1)** (detail). Archival pigment mounted on gesso board diptych, each framed panel: 35 3/8 x 27 3/8 inches. © Carrie Mae Weems. Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York.

Carrie Mae Weems

THE USUAL SUSPECTS

INTRODUCTION TEXT

Nationally celebrated Portland-born artist Carrie Mae Weems (American, b. 1953) asks probing questions about humanity, representation, and power in these photographic and video works. In *The Usual Suspects* she asks “How do you measure a life?”

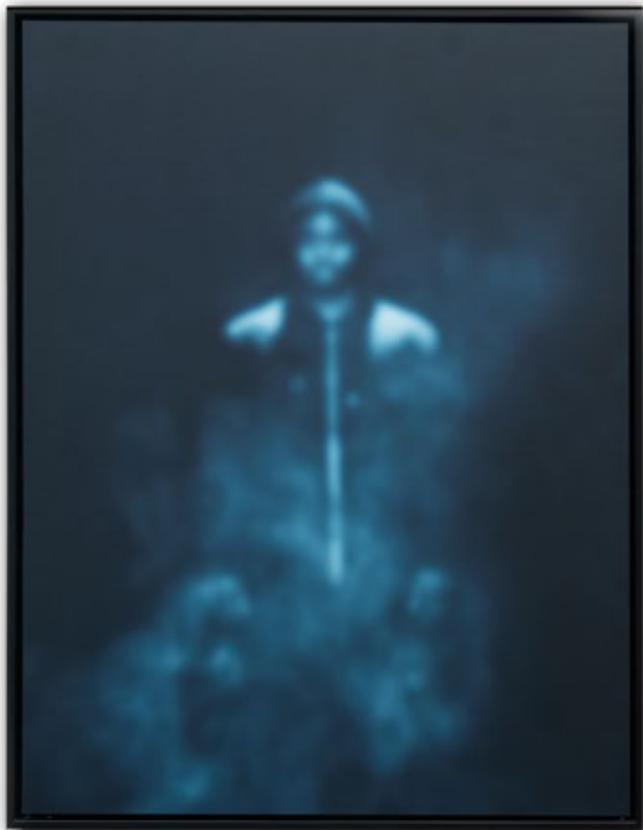
The works on view were created between 2014 and 2018. In them Weems addresses the constructed nature of racial identity—specifically, representations that associate black bodies with criminality, and the killings of black men, women, and children without judicial consequence. Through a formal language of blurred images, color blocks, stated facts, and meditative narration, she questions this sustained history of violence and inaction.

The concept of grace also informs this complex body of work. Drawing inspiration from the ancient Greek tragedy *Antigone*—in which the title character defies prevailing powers to bury her fallen brother—Weems urgently and sensitively memorializes the deaths of Sandra Bland, Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, and other victims of police and citizen violence.

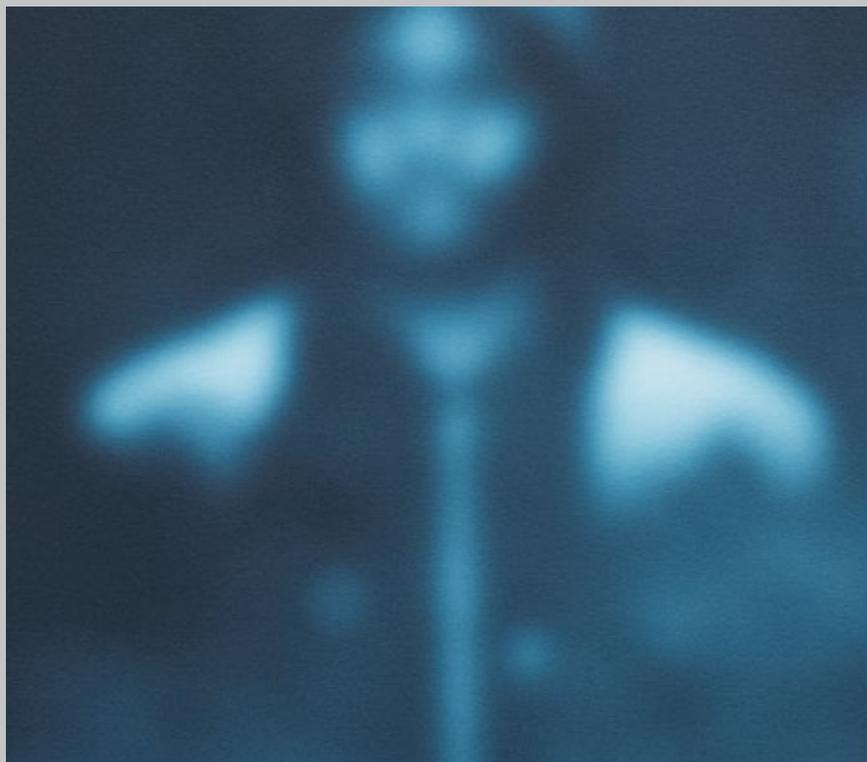
This spring, the University of Oregon will present Weems with an honorary doctoral degree in recognition of her profound contributions to the visual arts and the national conversation about race and injustice.

Carrie Mae Weems: The Usual Suspects was curated and organized by Courtney Taylor and the Louisiana State University Museum of Art and made possible at the JSMA with the Hartz FUNd for Contemporary Art.

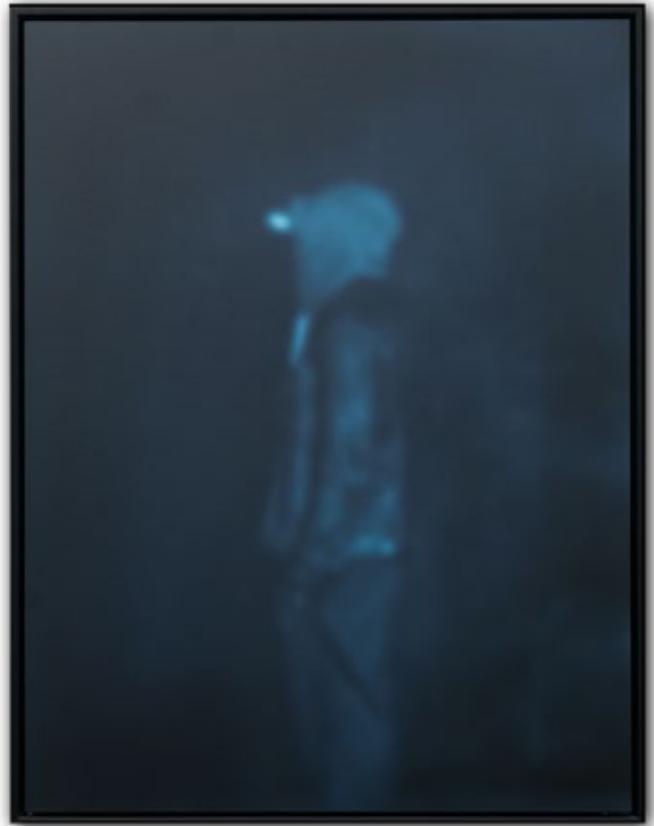
All the Boys (Profile 1)



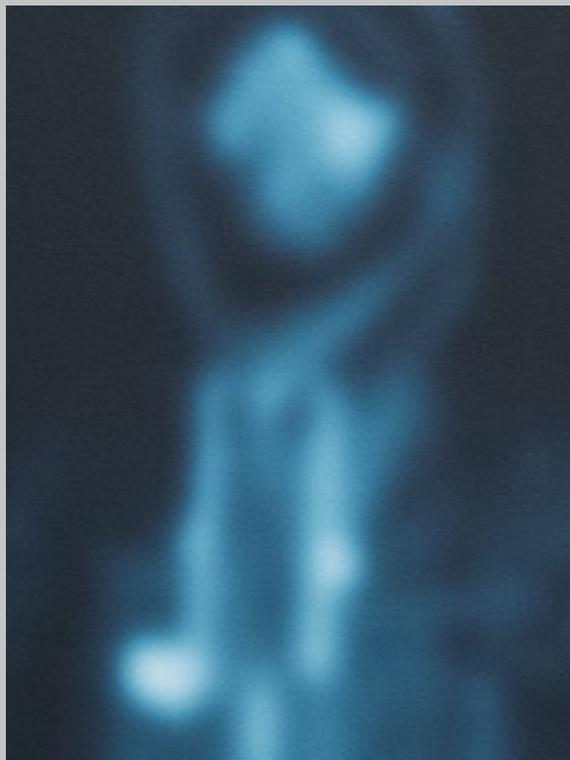
Carrie Mae Weems (American, b. 1953). **All the Boys (Profile 1)**, 2016. Archival pigment on gesso board. Diptych, each framed panel: 35 ³/₈ x 27 ³/₈ inches Courtesy of Jack Shainman Gallery



All the Boys (Profile 2)

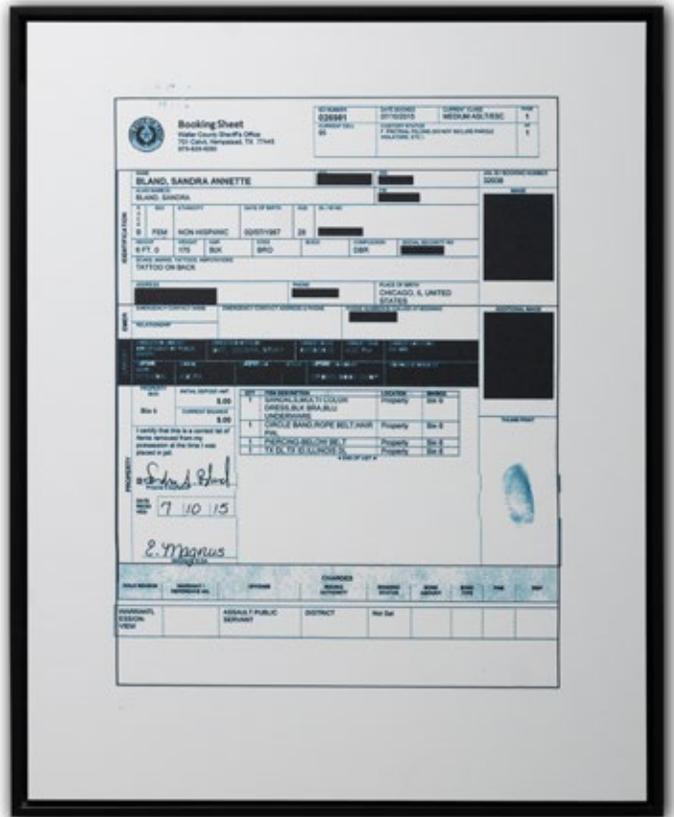


Carrie Mae Weems (American, b. 1953). **All the Boys (Profile 2)**, 2016. Archival pigment on gesso board. Diptych, each framed panel: 36 ³/₈ x 27 ³/₈ inches. Courtesy of Jack Shainman Gallery



Weems' dark, hooded figures force us to ask how identity is constructed and represented—and feared. Weems' soft-focused, shadowy treatment suggests the murky process by which racialized profiles are constructed. The figures point to cultural stereotypes that associate young black men with criminality and danger, making them always fit the "profile." All the Boys grew out of a performance piece entitled Grace Notes: Reflections for Now. Photographed are male musicians who arrived to film the work in hooded sweatshirts and jackets.

All the Boys (Blocked 1)

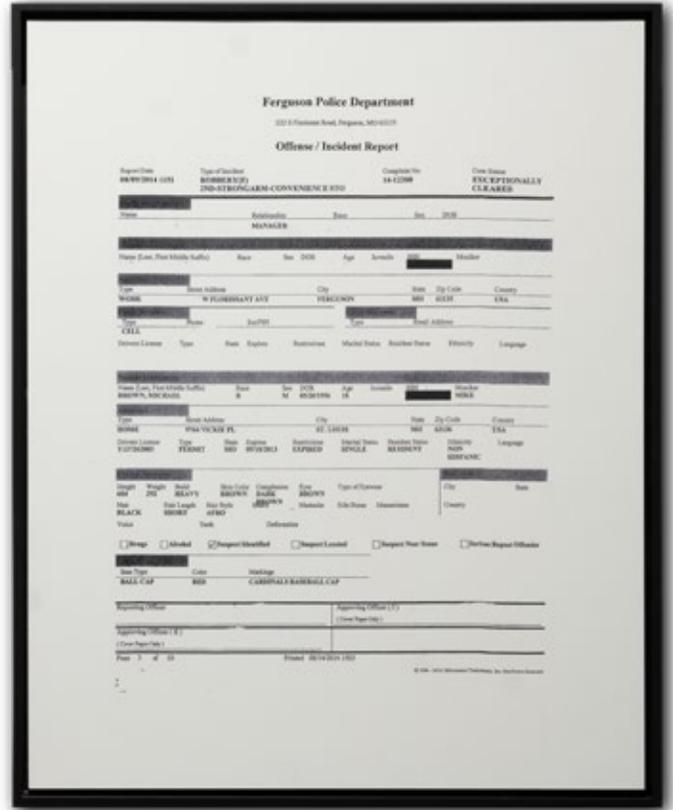


Carrie Mae Weems (American, b. 1953). **All the Boys (Blocked 1)**, 2016. Archival pigment print and silkscreened panel mounted on gesso board. Diptych, each framed panel: 31 3/8 x 27 3/8 inches. Courtesy of Jack Shainman Gallery

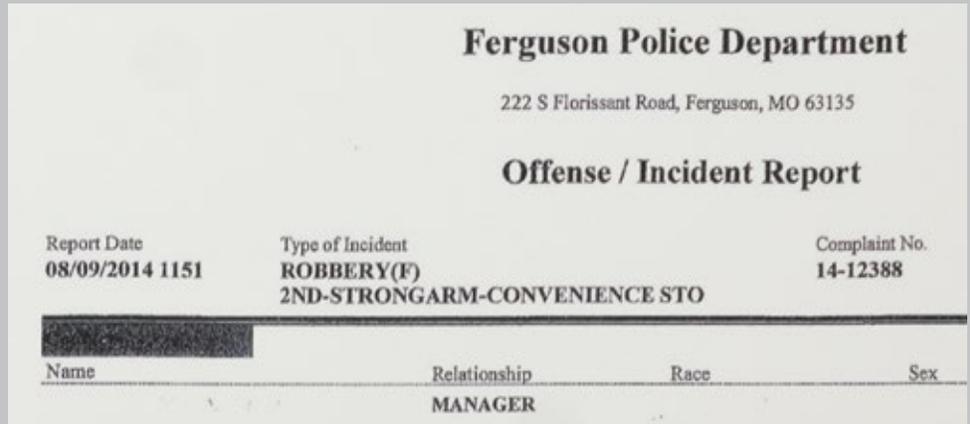
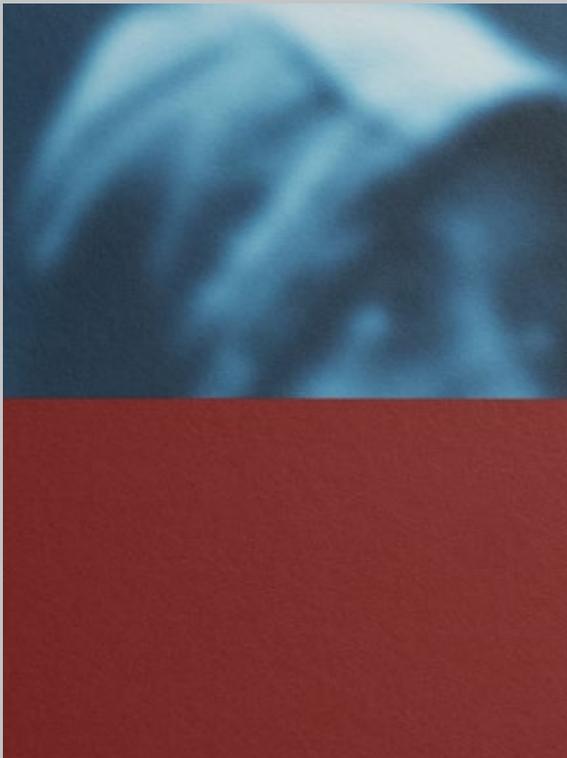


DATE OF BIRTH			AGE	DL / ID NO.	FBI	IMAGE
2/07/1987			28			
EYES	BUILD	COMPLEXION	SOCIAL SECURITY NO			ADDITIONAL IMAGE
BRO		DBR				
PHONE			PLACE OF BIRTH			THUMB PRINT
			CHICAGO, IL UNITED STATES			
CONTACT ADDRESS & PHONE			PHONE NUMBER(S) CALLED AT BOOKING			
ICBY	APPROX DATE	APPROX DATE	APPROX LOCATION			
BLK, BRN, BLU	1/7/1987	6/27/1988	FBI 1828			
STATE	CHECKED BY	MAGNIFY				
TY	ITEM DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	BIN/BOX			
1	SANDALS, MULTI COLOR DRESS, BLK BRA, BLU UNDERWARE	Property	Bin 5			
1	CIRCLE BAND, ROPE BELT, HAIR PIN,	Property	Bin 6			

All the Boys (Blocked 3)



Carrie Mae Weems (American, b. 1953). **All the Boys (Blocked 3)**, 2016. Archival pigment print and silkscreened panel mounted on gesso board. Diptych, each framed panel: 33 3/8 x 27 3/8 inches. Courtesy of Jack Shainman Gallery



A variation on the **All the Boys (Profiles)**, **All the Boys (Blocked)** take the "profile" a step further to suggest the outcomes of profiling by police and the public. We come face-to-face with police reports for Sandra Bland, Michael Brown, and Trayvon Martin and close-up images of young black men. Color, however, literally blocks their faces and by extension their humanity. The diptychs suggest this humanity is denied when police, judicial, and cultural systems do not see beyond demographic profiles.

All the Boys (Blocked 2)



Carrie Mae Weems (American, b. 1953). **All the Boys (Blocked 2)**, 2016. Archival pigment print and silkscreened panel mounted on gesso board. Diptych, each framed panel: 32 3/8 x 27 3/8 inches. Courtesy of Jack Shainman Gallery



Region: C.S.A.: GRID: **PARTIAL REPORT ONLY**
00500 S 13 **Sanford Police Department**

Name: MARTIN, TRAYVON BENJAMIN R/S: B/M DOB 2/5/1995 or Age:
Adult/Juvenile: J SSN: Hgt: 600 Wgt: 160 Hair: BLACK Eyes: BR
Person Type: VICTIM-JUVENILE City of Birth: MIAMI
Address: [REDACTED]
Email:
OthPhone1: OthPhone2:
Employer Address: Job:
Comments:

Name: [REDACTED] R/S: W/F DOB 6/7/1975 or Age:
Adult/Juvenile: A SSN: Hgt: 502 Wgt: 125 Hair: BROW Eyes: HA
Person Type: WITNESS- ADULT City of Birth:
Address: [REDACTED]
Email:
OthPhone1: OthPhone2:
Employer Address: Job:
Comments:

Name: [REDACTED] R/S: W/F DOB 8/25/1955 or Age:

Color, Real and Imagined



Carrie Mae Weems (American, b. 1953). **Color Real and Imagined**, 2014. From Blue Notes series. Archival pigment with silkscreened color blocks. Framed: 38 ³/₄ x 54 ¹³/₁₆ inches Courtesy of Jack Shainman Gallery



Featured behind blocks of green, blue, red, and yellow is singer and pianist Dinah Washington. Weems' interest in color is both formal and cultural (real and imagined). The color blocks replicate the colored lens through which we often see images and one another.

Laquan: A Timeline



Carrie Mae Weems (American, b. 1953). **Laquan: A Timeline**, 2018. Archival pigment print and silkscreened panel mounted on gesso board each framed panel: 31 $\frac{3}{16}$ x 46 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches. Courtesy of Jack Shainman Gallery



Weems collapses images adapted from police dash cam footage into five panels showing the brief moments immediately before and after the shooting of Laquan McDonald by Chicago police in 2014. Three fleeting seconds elapse between panels three and four—between officers pointing and shots fired, Laquan recoiling. Weems herself slows down, and asks the viewer to slow down and consider more deeply the time it takes to take a life.

The Usual Suspects



Carrie Mae Weems (American, b. 1953). **The Usual Suspects**, 2016. Silkscreened panels. grid of 9, each framed panel: 30 x 24 inches. Courtesy of Jack Shainman Gallery

JULY 17, 2014.... NEW YORK, NY

THE SUSPECT

ERIC GARNER

BLACK MALE

AGE 43

6.3

350 LBS

MATCHING THE DESCRIPTION OF THE ALLEGED, PERPETRATOR WAS STOPPED AND/OR APPREHENDED, PHYSICALLY ENGAGED, AND SHOT AT THE SCENE. SUSPECT KILLED. TO DATE, NO ONE HAS BEEN CHARGED IN THE MATTER.

Each of the nine panels references a black man or woman killed by police shootings in recent years. Weems' panels evoke police reports with the dates, names, and physical descriptions of the "suspects." In each report, the suspect is described as "matching the description" and "killed," with a final note that "no one has been charged in the matter." Weems' stark portrayal of repeated facts presents a pattern of violent action and the demographic pattern of suspects. Confronted with this pattern of evidence that points to systemic problems, questions arise around our policing, judicial, and cultural systems. (As of 2019, charges have been filed in some cases referenced by **The Usual Suspects**.)

People of a Darker Hue



Carrie Mae Weems (American, b. 1953). **People of a Darker Hue**, 2016. Video, running time 14:52. Courtesy of Jack Shainman Gallery



NOTE: This video contains disturbing sound and imagery, including police footage, that may not be appropriate for all visitors.

Weems merges poetry, historic voiceover, police footage, and her own poetic imagery and voice in **People of a Darker Hue** to commemorate black lives lost at the hands of police in recent years. Weems recites the names of those lost. Her refrain “always stopped,” “always charged,” and “for reasons unknown,” points to the senseless pattern of violence. This work, among others, bears a relationship to Weems’ reading of *Antigone*. Weems likens the denial of Antigone’s right to bury her brother to a lack of acknowledgement of injustices surrounding police shootings of African-American men and women.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND LINKS

Link to the video **People of a Darker Hue** in the exhibition **Carrie Mae Weems: The Usual Suspects**.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fZNTIpzXfB8>

Carrie Mae Weems: Beyond Black and White, a talk by Katie Delmez from the Frist Museum

<https://youtu.be/Jxt3h-iPhEk>

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