

**MIKELLE SMITH OMARI-TUNKARA, MFA, MA, Ph.D.**  
**Short Curriculum Vitae**

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**Address:** School of Art, Art History Division, Tucson Arizona 85721.  
**Mailing:** 6990 E. 22<sup>nd</sup> St. #110-107, Tucson, Arizona 85710  
**Email:** drsotunkara@gmail.com  
**Web:** <http://www.u.arizona.edu/~aasp/>

**Position:** **Professor** - Theory, Methods, Art History of African, African Diaspora, and African American Art and Culture; The *Traditional Arts of Non-European Societies*. The University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona 85721;  
**Faculty Fellow**- Manzanita-Mohave Residence Hall  
**Faculty Fellow Coordinator**, Office of the Vice Provost of Student Affairs

**Chronology Of Education:**

1974 -1984 University of California, Los Angeles  
Department of Art, Design & Art History  
**Degree: Ph.D.** In Art History, 9/84; 3.98GPA (4.0 Point Scale)  
Dissertation Topic: *Cultural Confluence in Candomble Nago: A Socio-Historical Study of Art and Aesthetics in An Afro-Brazilian Religion.*  
Dissertation Advisor: Arnold Gary Rubin  
Major Fields: African and African American Art  
Specializations: African Diaspora, Yoruba Art and Ritual.

**Degree: M.A** in Art History, March 1979  
Master's Thesis Topic: *A Historiography of Yoruba Art in Brazil and the United States.*  
Director: Arnold Gary Rubin  
Readers: Cecelia Klein, Albert Boime  
**Major:** African, Diaspora Art; **Minors:** Islamic, African American, Native North American Art.

1972-1974 Washington State University, Pullman  
Department of Art  
**Degree: M.F.A.**, June 1974  
**Majors:** Painting, Printmaking;  
Directors: Jo Hockenull, Richard Sterling

1968 -1970 California State University, Hayward  
Department of Art  
Degree: B.F.A. June 1970, in Painting, Printmaking

## Chronology Of Employment

### Teaching Positions:

- 2000-present      **Professor of Art History**, School of Art, Art History Division.  
**Affiliate**, Womens's Studies. ***On sabbatical and paid research leave August, 2008 – May, 2010.*** Taught M.A. and PhD. theory, methods, and Africana arts, topical graduate seminars. Undergraduate courses: African; African American/Diaspora; Pacific Rim/Oceania; Mesoamerican, and Indigenous North American arts, religions, societies.
- 2000 -1991      **Associate Professor** of Art History, Hired Tenured.  
Department of Art, University of Arizona, Tucson
- 1997      **Visiting Professor**, African American Art History, University of Cape-town, South Africa. *Summer.*
- 1990-91      **Senior Research Associate** in African Art,  
Obafemi Awolowo University Ile-Ife, Oyo State, Nigeria
- 1990      **Tenured in 1990**, California State University, Long Beach
- 1986-90      **Associate Professor**, Joint Appointment in Art History and  
Black Studies, California State University, Long Beach
- 1984-85      **Assistant Professor of Art History**, University of Massachusetts,  
Harbor Campus, Boston, Massachusetts. Traditional and Contemporary African, Afro-American Art History. Western Survey and Western Modern Art, Art History Department.
- 1984      **Lecturer in Art History**, University of Southern California, Los Angeles
- 1983      **Lecturer**, California State University, Long Beach
- 1978-80      **Teaching Associate in Art History**, University of California at Los Angeles. Art, 55, 54, 52, 51: Modern; Medieval; Renaissance; The Arts of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas.
- 1974-77      **Research Associate** in Art History, University of California at Los Angeles. Islamic Art History with Prof. Katarina Otto-Dorn
- 1973-74      **Instructor** in Studio Art, Washington State University, Pullman, (drawing, painting, printmaking). Developed the first Afro-American and African art history courses. Developed slide library and registry of inter/national/ local African, Afro-American artists.

### Administrative Positions:

- 1/2000 -1/2002      **Art History Graduate Student Advisor**, The Art History Program,  
The University of Arizona.
- 1995- 1996      **Director**, African-American Studies Program, University of Arizona.
- 1994-95      **Interim Director**, African American Studies Program, December 12,  
1994-June 30, 1995, African American Studies Program.
- 1988-89      **Interim Chair**, Department of Black Studies, California State University,  
Long Beach

**Languages:** Competent: Yoruba; Fluent: Portuguese  
Reading: French, Portuguese, Yoruba

**Areas of Interest:** African Art History and Culture  
African-American Art History, Society, and Politics

African Diaspora Art and Culture - Brazil, Trinidad, U.S.A.  
African and African Diaspora Cinema  
Theory and Methods of African Art History  
Theory and Methods of Euro-American Art History  
Arts and Societies of Africa, Pre-Columbia, Oceania,  
and Native North America.  
Contemporary African Arts and the Arts of Islam

## **PUBLICATIONS/SCHOLARLY/CREATIVE ACTIVITY**

### **SCHOLARLY BOOKS, MONOGRAPHS - Accepted or Published:**

- 2005, October. *Manipulating the Sacred: Yoruba Art, Ritual and Resistance in Brazil*.  
Wayne State University Press. Detroit, Michigan. ISBN: 0-8143-2852-0  
<http://wsupress.wayne.edu/iafricana/afranthropology/omarims/omarib.html>  
NOMINATED: *Arnold G. Rubin ACASA Single-Author Book Award*, 2006.  
REVIEWED: *African Arts Journal*, V. 40, No. 2: 94-95, Summer 2007.  
REVIEWED: for H-AfrArts by Andrea S. Allen, Anthropology Department,  
Harvard University, February 28, 2008.
- 1984 *From the Inside to the Outside: The Art and Ritual of Bahian Candomble*,  
Monograph Series No. 24, Museum of Cultural History, University of  
California, Los Angeles.  
REVIEWED: *African Arts Journal*, 1985.
- In Progress. *Dialogues With Visual Culture: Indigenous Art and Society in Africa, the First  
Nation Americas, and the Pacific Basin*.
- In Progress. *Blacks and Whites In São Paulo: Globalization of African Arts, Identity, and  
Religion*.

### **CHAPTERS IN SCHOLARLY BOOKS:**

- 1994 Aesthetics and Ritual of Candomble Nago, pages 135-139 in  
*African Religions: Experience and Expression*, Editor, Dr. Thomas Blakely,  
James Curry Ltd, London.; Heineman Portsmouth, N.H.
1988. Solutions: Afro-Brazilian Women, their Power, and their Art, in *Sacred  
Dimensions of Women's Experience*. Editor, Elizabeth Dodson Gray. Wellesley,  
Mass: Roundtable Press.
1987. Yoruba Art and Religion in the United States, *Yoruba Culture in the Diaspora*,  
Editor, 'Wande Abimbola, University of Ife Press, Ife, Nigeria.

### **REFEREED JOURNAL ARTICLES/ESSAYS:**

- 2008 "Candomble" and "Possession," *Encyclopedia of African Thought*, Oxford  
University Press, Editor Abiola Irele.

2003. "Oyo Tunji: An African community in the United States." *Encyclopedia of African Folklore*. Editor, Phillip Peek. Garland Press.
1996. An Indigenous Anatomy of Power and Art: A New Look at Yoruba Women in Society and Religion. *Dialectical Anthropology*, Volume 21: 89-98.
1991. Completing the Circle: Notes on African Art, Society and Religion in Oyo Tunji, South Carolina, *African Arts Journal*, Vol., No. 3, July, 66-75, 96.
- 1990a. Creativity in Adversity: Afro-Bahian Women, Power, and Art, pp. 35-41, in *The International Review of African American Arts*, V. 9, N. 1.
- 1990b. *Critique, African Art Studies: The State of the Discipline*, Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, D.C.
- 1989a. The Role of the Gods in Afro-Brazilian Ancestral Ritual: *African Arts Journal*, UCLA. November 1989, Vol. XXIII, No. 1.
- 1989b. *Biographical Essay in Honor of Dr. Samella Sanders Lewis*, Women's Caucus for Art, 1989 College Art Association.
1980. Woman-Power in Yoruba and Benin Societies, in *Mother, Worker, Ruler, Witch: Cross Cultural Images of Women*. Editor, Cecelia Klein, Museum of Cultural History, University of California, Los Angeles.
1979. West African Influence on a Portuguese-Brazilian Cult, pp. 59 - 71, *Minority Voices*, Vol. 3, No. 2.

#### **EXHIBITION CATALOGS:**

1994. Editor, *Frames in Transition: Concepts and Contexts of African Art in Tucson Collections*, Tucson: University of Arizona Department of Art; Phoenix: Arizona Humanities Council.
1993. *African Texts/American Sub-Texts: Adesequn Muneer H. Bahauddeen*, Department of Art, Pasadena City College.
1991. *YEDAMARIA: Aspects of An Afro-Brazilian Artist*. Exhibition Brochure, California State University, Northridge, Ca.

#### **CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS:**

2000. Yemoja Hermeneutics and Aesthetics, Florida International University, Department of Religious Studies, Miami Florida.
1999. Lifesaving Designs for the New Millennium: Yoruba Artistic and Cultural Inheritances in the Americas; The Sixth World Congress Of Orisa Tradition And

Culture, Port Of Spain, Trinidad/Tobago.

**INVITED SOLO LECTURES:**

- 2008 *Manipulating the Sacred: Theoretical Frameworks, and Methodologies for Studying African Diaspora Arts and Communities*. Jerry Wood Lecture, Swarthmore College, Pa,
- 2007 *Contemporary African Visual Expressions: The Poetics and Politics of Post/Modernisms*, University of Arizona Art Museum, November 14.
- 2007 *A Sampling of African Art*, Arizona Senior Academy, October 31.
- 2004 *African Influences in African American Arts*, Tucson.
- 2002 *Digesting the West: Contemporary African Art Encounters*. Oct. 13, UA Art Museum.
- 2001 *Art, Culture, and the Human Struggle*, March 22, University Art Museum. Sponsor: MLK Celebration Committee.
- 2001 *Arizona Perspectives on African and African-American Art*, March 24, African American Historical and Geneological Society Anniversary Meeting.
2000. *As Artes Rituais nos Estados Unidos*, Universidade de São Paulo, Brazil. December 12.
- 1998 Gallery Talk, *The Art of Robert Colescott; African American Cultural Permutations*, the University Museum of Art, Tucson, Arizona, December 9.
1998. *African Textiles: The Art of Power and Display*. October 1, The St. Louis Museum of Art, St. Louis, Missouri.
1997. *Africa - A Sense of Wonder: Alternative Perspectives*. Phoenix Art Museum.
1996. *Africa: a Continental View*, Tucson, Main Library.
- 1996 .*The Traditional Arts of Africa*, Sun City Museum.

**Scholarly Presentations:**

**Invited Symposia:**

- 1999 *Yemoja Hermeneutics and Aesthetics*, December 9 - 12, Florida International University, Miami Florida. Presenter.
- 1999 *Art and Ethics among the Yoruba*, Conference on Yoruba Spirituality and Ethics in the Odu Ifa, The University of California, Los Angeles, February 4 - 7, 1999. **Panel chair** and presenter. The Art of Central Africa, a national symposium, in conjunction with the exhibit Masterpieces from Central Africa, The Royal Museum, Tervuren, Belgium. Held at The St. Louis Art Museum, October 2 - 3, 1998.  
**Panel Organizer:** Session III -- Changing/Travelling Icons: Central African Art in Popular Cultures. **Presenter:** *Artistry and Memory: Central African Inflections in Brazilian Inquice (Nkisi)*
- 1997 The Critical Reading Synopsis as an Instrument for Critical Thinking in African Art, Wakonse workshop on Critical and Creative Thinking Strategies for Teachers. Presenter.

**Workshops/Seminars Given:**

- 2006 *Crowns in African-American Culture and the Concept of Ori among the Yoruba of Nigeria*. ATC, Tucson and Phoenix. Invited.
- 2005 *Finding Your Leadership Model*, DST, Tempe. Invited.
- 1997 *Theorizing the Diaspora*, Department of Art and Architecture, University of Maryland, College Park. Invited.

### **Selected Refereed Conferences/Juried Papers Presented:**

- 2008 Co-Chair with R.A. Walker, *Art History Open Session: African Art*, College Art Association (CAA), Dallas, Texas, February.
- 2007 *RE/Membering Spirits, Ancestors: A Visual Critique/Commentary on the 'Worlds' of Africana Mosaics*. 23 March, 2007, The International Society of Mosaic Artists, Phoenix, Arizona.
- 2007 Chair, Organizer, and discussant for Panel: *in/Cubations: Visuality in African-German and European-Brazilian Communities*. Reviewed and accepted for the Triennial Symposium on African Art, March 28 – April 1, University of Gainesville, Florida.
- 2001 Panel Chair and Organizer, PANEL TITLE: *Routes/Roots: Art, Identity, and Agency in Africa and the Diaspora*. April 28. Reviewed and accepted for the 12th International Triennial Symposium on African Art April 25 - 29, St. Thomas, the Virgin Islands.
- 2001 Panel Presenter Reviewed and accepted for presentation on Arts in the Yoruba Diaspora panel, Chair Dr. B. Lawal, for the 12th International Triennial Symposium on African Art, April 25 - 29, 2001. St. Thomas, the Virgin Islands.
- 1999 *Lifesaving Designs for the New Millennium: Yoruba Artistic and Cultural Inheritances in the Americas*, presented at The Sixth World Congress Of Orisa Tradition And Culture, August 14 - 22, 1999 Port Of Spain, Trinidad/Tobago.
- 1998 *Pasts in the Present: Negotiating "Tradition" in the Art Practice of Two Southern African Women Artists*, April 7, Paper presented at the 11th Triennial Symposium on Traditional African and African Diasporan Art, New Orleans, Panel : "Contemporary African Art Practice At The Turn Of The Millennium Panel Chairs: John Pepper, ylvester Ogbechie.

### **Citations Of My Scholarly Work:**

- 2002 Sullivan, Edward. *Brazil; Body & Soul*. Guggenheim Museum, N.Y.
- 2000 Harding, Rachel. *A Refuge in Thunder: Candomble and Alternative Spaces of Blackness*. U of Indiana Press.
- 1999 Matory, J. Lorand "The English Professors of Brazil: On the Diasporic Roots of the Yoruba Nation", pp. 72 - 103 in *Comparative Studies in Society and History* Vol. 41, No. 1.
- 1997 Drewal, Henry John and John Mason. *Beads Body and Soul: Art and Light in the Yoruba Universe*. Los Angeles: UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History, 1997.
- 1997 Voeks, Robert A. *Sacred leaves of Candomble*. U of Texas Press.
- 1996 Brown, David. "Towards an Ethnoaesthetics of Santeria Ritual Arts: the Practice of Altar-Making and Gift Exchange", pp 77 - 146 in *Santeria Aesthetics in Contemporary Latin American Art*, Washington D.C. and London: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- 1996 Lawal, Babatunde. *The Gelede Spectacle: Art, Gender, and Social Harmony in an African Culture*. Seattle: U of Wash Press.

### **Honors And Awards:**

- 2004 Black Women's Task Force, Tucson: Unsung Heroine.
- 2003 College of Fine Arts, Theater Arts Brick Pathway: Service Honoree
- 2002 College of Fine Arts Roy and Stardust Johnson Mentoring Award.

- 2000 Nomination, Outstanding Graduate Teacher and Mentor, Graduate College, The University of Arizona
- 1999 -1995 Faculty Fellow ,undergraduate mentor Dean of Students Office.
- 1998 Award and Publication in Who's Who Among American Teachers Nominated by Antonio Carr currently enrolled in UA Medical School.
- 1998 Fellowship, University Teaching Center Diversity Training Workshop.
- 1997 Wakonse Teaching Fellow: Camp Tontozona, June (Retreat/ conference for selected fellows from the three Arizona campuses)
- 1997 Outstanding Black Woman of the Year Plaque presented by Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity at their annual Black Women's Appreciation Banquet, December 6, 1997.
- 1996 Nomination and Award, Women's Resource Center Professor of the Month
- 1996 Outstanding Advisor Bronze Plaque, African American Student Alliance

**Service**

**Outreach**

**Local/State/University:**

- 2008-1999 African American Advisory Committee, UA.
- 2005 Reviewer, Dr. Gwen Bishop Social Action Award.
- 2004-2002 President, Tucson Alumnae Chapter, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated. International Service NGO
- 1999 –1995 Founder and Director, African American Partners for Success mentoring program pairing University of Arizona and Tucson Unified district elementary students
- 1997-1994 Arizona Humanities Scholar, Arizona Humanities Council, Phoenix
- 1997 Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Active Member. Chair, International Committee; Co- Chair, Arts Committee
- 1996 Outreach Lecture: Sabino High School, November 6, "Africa: Tradition And Modern Views"
- 1996-1994 Office of Civil Rights Monitoring Committee TUSD School District

**National/International**

- 2007 Manuscript Evaluator, : *African Arts Journal*.
- 2002 Manuscript Evaluator, Bedford Press, N.Y.
- 2000 African Art Consultant, Grinnell College, Art History Department.
- 2000 Manuscript Evaluator, Art Beyond the West: The Arts of Africa,India, Asia, the Americas and the Pacific, Calmann& King ltd. 71 Great Russell Street LONDON WC1B 3BN.
- 2000-1996 Member, Editorial Board, Nka: Journal of Contemporary African Art
- 1999 Grant Reviewer, American Council of Learned Societies.
- 1999 Southwest Region Coordinator, International Conference of Orisa Tradition, Art and Culture.
- 1997 Founding Member, Secretary Elect, Arts of the African Diaspora Association, President Juanita Holland, University of Md. College Pk.
- 1997–90 North American Vice-President, International Conference of Orisa Tradition, Art and Culture.
- 1996 –92 Grant Reviewer, Post-Doctoral Fellowships, Ford Foundation

## **Citizenship**

### **Intramural**

#### **Departmental Committees:**

- 2008-2006 Co-Chair, Visiting Artists and Scholars Committee
- 2008-2007 Chair, Art History Evaluations committee
- 2006 Member, Student Affairs Committee
- 2006 Member, Art History Research and Lecture Committee
- 2006-5 Member, Undergraduate Affairs Committee
- 2003-2004 Chair, School of Art By-Laws Committee
- 2003 Co-Chair, Peer Review Committee
- 2002 Chair, Native North American Art History Search Committee
- 2000 Chair, Spanish Medievalist Art History Search Committee
- 2000 Chair, Cultural Diversity Committee
- 1999 Member, Visiting Artist Committee
- 1999 Member, Student Recruitment and Retention Committee
- 1998-97 Member, Undergraduate Committee
- 1996 Member, Promotion and Tenure
- 1995-94 Member, Art Department Advisory Council
- 1994 Coordinator, Team Taught Art in Non-Western Societies, ARH 112
- 1993-94 Chair, Scholarship Committee
- 1993-91 Member, Ph.D. Program Committee
- 1993-92 Member, Departmental Peer Review Committee
- 1992-91 Chair, Committee for Cultural Diversity in the Arts

### **Other**

- 1996 Comparative Cultures and Literatures Faculty.  
Team-Taught CCLS 503 Graduate Seminar with Jerry Hogle

#### **College Committees:**

- 2002-2003 Member, Diversity Committee
- 2001-02 Member, Diversity Committee
- 1996 Member, College of Humanities Curriculum Committee
- 1996-95 Member, Student Affairs Committee, Standing committee of the Faculty Senate.

#### **University Committees:**

- 2005 – 1999 African American Advisory Council
- 2004 Graduate Travel Review Committee
- 1998 - 1995 Member, Diversity Action Council
- 1998-97 Member, Academic Review Committee, Faculty Senate
- 1997 Chair, Vice President's Small Grants Evaluation Committee
- 1997 Chair, Nominations Committee, Diversity Action Council
- 1997 -1996 Member, Academic Review Committee, Faculty Senate
- 1996 -1995 Member, Steering Committee, Campus Climate Team

## **Extramural Service to the Profession**

### **Symposia/Conferences/Lectures Organized:**

- 1998 Changing/Traveling Icons: Central African Art in Popular Cultures, Panel Chair and Organizer, Session III, Saturday, October 3, 1:30 - 4:00 p.m., Invited Symposium: The Art of Central Africa, The St. Louis Museum of Art, St. Louis, Missouri.
- 1996 Cornel West, Race Matters, Lecture, January 25. Organizer.
- 1996 Rowland Abiodun: What Comes After Six is more than Seven: Contrasts in African and Euro-American Art. Organizer.

### Grants:

#### State:

- 1997 Arizona Humanities Council Program Grant, 100% my contribution

#### University:

- 2008 Dean of Students. Faculty/Student Interaction Grant, 100% my contribution.
- 2002 Provost's award of \$90,000. to bring First Nation Art Historian. 100% my contribution.
- 2001 Foreign Travel Grant to present a paper at an international conference in St. Thomas, Virgin Islands; 100% my contribution.
- 2000 The University of Arizona Provost's Publication Subvention grant for color reproductions; Wayne State University Presses; Omari - Manipulating the Sacred: Yoruba Art, Ritual and Resistance in Bahia, Brazil. 100% my contribution.
- 1999 Foreign Travel Grant to present a paper at the international Congress of Orisa Tradition, Port of Spain, Trinidad; 100% my contribution.
- 1998 Dean of Students. Faculty/Student Interaction Grant, 100% my contribution.
- 1998 Diversity Action Council Co-Sponsorship Grant with the African American Student Alliance and the African American Cultural Resource Center, 80% my contribution.
- 1997 Dean of Students/At&T Grant., 100% my contribution.
- 1997 Diversity Action Council Co-Sponsorship, 100% my contribution.
- 1997 College of Fine Arts Incentive Grant, 100% my contribution.
- 1996 Vice President of Research Small Grant "*Critique and Creativity: Women Artists in Contemporary Africa.*", 100% contribution.
- 1996 Faculty Development Computer Connectivity Award 100% my contribution.

### Professional Organizations

Arts Council of the African Studies Association  
 African-American Geneological Society  
 Arts in the African Diaspora  
 College Art Association  
 World Congress of *Orisa* Tradition and Culture  
 Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated

