

## **Shaun Leonardo**

### **EDUCATION:**

2005 M.F.A., Painting, San Francisco Art Institute  
2004 Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture Residency & Grant  
2001 B.A., Visual Arts, Bowdoin College, Brunswick, ME

### **HONORS:**

2022 Center for Justice Innovation, Honoree, New York, NY  
2021 Art 21: New York Close Up, New York, NY  
2019 NYC Arts in Education Roundtable keynote, New York, NY  
    Creative Time, Social Impact Award, New York, NY  
    Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Board of Governors, New York, NY  
    Socrates Sculpture Park, Board Member, Long Island City, NY, 2019-2024  
    Bowdoin College of Art, Advisory Council Member, Brunswick, ME, 2019-2023  
2018 No Longer Empty, Honoree, New York, NY  
2017 Brooklyn Museum, *The Brooklyn Conference* keynote, Brooklyn, NY  
2015 Yerba Buena Center, *YBCA100* honoree, San Francisco, CA

### **SELECTED AWARDS:**

2025 The Joyce Foundation, Creative Impact Award  
2021 Pollock Krasner Foundation Grant  
    National Endowment for the Arts award for MassMoCA exhibition  
2019 A Blade of Grass Fellowship, New York, NY  
2018 Art for Justice Fund, New York, NY  
    Guggenheim Social Practice Initiative, New York, NY  
2017 Smack Mellon, Artist Studio Program, Brooklyn, NY  
2016 Creative Capital, collaboration with Melanie Crean and Sable E. Smith  
2015 Franklin Furnace Fund for performance art  
    Franklin Furnace Fund, with Melanie Crean and Sable E. Smith  
2011 Jerome Foundation Travel and Study Grant  
2010 Franklin Furnace Fund for performance art  
    McColl Center for Visual Art Residency and Fellowship

### **SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS:**

2024 *The Return of El Conquistador*, Queens Museum, NY  
    #23, Andrew Rafacz Gallery, Chicago, NY  
2023 *The Messengers*, The Art Show (ADAA Fair), w/ Cristin Tierney Gallery, New York, NY  
2021 *Between Four Freedoms*, FDR Four Freedoms State Park, Roosevelt Island, NY  
2021 *The Breath of Empty Space*, The Bronx Museum of the Arts, Bronx, NY  
2020 *The Breath of Empty Space*, Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, North Adams, MA  
    *The Breath of Empty Space*, Maryland Institute of Art, Baltimore, MD  
2019 *Mirror/Echo/Tilt*, with Melanie Crean & Sable E. Smith, New Museum, New York, NY  
    *Testimony*, Gund Gallery, Kenyon College, Gambier, OH  
2018 *Primitive Games*, Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY  
2017 *The Eulogy*, Out of Line series, the High Line, New York, NY  
    *Assembly*, Recess, Brooklyn, NY  
2016 *Something I Can Feel*, curated by Derrick Adams, VOLTA NY, New York, NY

2013 *Untitled (A Performance Project)*, Madragoras Art Space, Long Island City, NY  
*Champion of the World*, Praxis International Art, New York, NY

**SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS:**

2026 *Get in the Game: Sports, Art, Culture*, Perez Art Museum, Miami, FL, 2026  
Crystal Bridges, Bentonville, AR, 2025; SFMoMA, San Francisco, CA, 2024

2025 *Fifteen*, Cristin Tierney Gallery, New York, NY  
*Let's talk about (y)our Anger*, Bilsar Arka Bina, Istanbul, Turkey  
*Strike Fast, Dance Lightly: Artists on Boxing*, Norton Museum of Art, W Palm Beach, FL

2024 *The sun still rises in spite of everything*, Davidson College, Davidson, NC  
*Men of Change*, Smithsonian Institution (SITES), traveling exhibition (2019-2023)

2023 *Something Beautiful: Reframing La Colección*, El Museo del Barrio, New York, NY (-2024)  
*Men of Change*, Smithsonian Institution (SITES), traveling exhibition (2019-2023)

2022 *All Opposing Players*, curated by the Racial Imaginary Institute, David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles, CA  
*Articulating Activism*, The 8th Floor, New York, NY  
*Melanie Crean & Shaun Leonardo*, Pratt MWP Gallery, Utica, NY

2021 *Vida, Muerte, Justicia*, Ogden Contemporary Arts, Ogden UT  
*Structure Identity Transformation*, david lusk gallery, Memphis / Nashville, TN  
*Breath Taking*, New Mexico Museum of Art, Santa Fe, NM  
*Cynthia Woods Mitchell Center for the Arts 2020-2021 Artists-in-Residence Spotlight*, Blaffer Art Museum, Houston, TX

2019 *Culture and the People: El Museo del Barrio: 1969-2019*, El Museo del Barrio, New York, NY  
*Distance*, Dorsky Gallery, Long Island City, NY  
*Messengers: Artists as Witnesses*, University of New Hampshire Museum of Art, Durham, NH

2018 *A Truthful Mirror*, Project for Empty Space, Newark, NJ  
*A VOID*, curated by Paul Ramírez Jonas, 601Artspace, New York, NY  
*Walls Turned Sideways*, Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, TX  
*Second Sight: The Paradox of Vision in Contemporary Art*, Bowdoin Museum of Art, Brunswick, ME  
*Portland Biennial*, Portland Museum of Art, Portland, ME

2017 *Hold These Truths*, No Longer Empty, Nathan Cummings Foundation, New York, NY  
*Scrimmage: American Artists Image Football from the Civil War to the Present*, The Canton Museum of Art, Canton, OH; The Figge Museum of Art, Davenport, IA

2016 *A Dark Matter...*, Tarble Arts Center, Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, IL  
*Whisper or Shout: Artists in the Social Sphere*, BRIC, Brooklyn, NY

2015 *Radical Presence*, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, CA  
*Between History and the Body*, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor Gallery, New York, NY  
*Venturing Out of the Heart of Darkness*, Harvey B. Gantt Center, Charlotte, NC  
*RESPOND*, Smack Mellon, Brooklyn, NY

2014 *Crossing Brooklyn*, Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY

**SELECTED PRESS:**

*Body Slams, Curated: Pro Wrestling Enters Its Museum Era*, The New York Times, A.O. Scott, Nov. 18, 2025

*Talking a Big Game: The Art of Sports & The Sport of Art*, Hyperallergic, podcast, March 25, 2025

*Strike Fast, Dance Lightly: largest ever boxing exhibition links sport and art*, The Guardian, Rich Tenorio, December 3, 2024

*Draw Sports Fans to an Art Museum? That's the Goal*, The New York Times, Emmanuel Morgan, Oct. 18, 2024

*Reframing Freedom*, The New York Times, Weekend Roundup, Melissa Smith, pg. C2, Nov. 25, 2021

*Against Passive Seeing*, Jane Ursula Harris, Flash Art, 333 Winter 2020-21, Features, January 20, 2021

*Shaun Leonardo's Stark Images Of Police Brutality Leaving MASS MoCA, Without Incident, Headed To The Bronx*, Forbes, Chadd Scott, December 8, 2020

*Mass MoCA Exhibit 'The Breath Of Empty Space' Reinterprets Media Representations of Police Violence*, WBUR Radio Boston, Zoe Mitchell and Tiziana Dearing, October 14, 2020

*At Mass MoCA an artist draws a long line on police killings*, The Boston Globe, Murray Whyte, September 10, 2020

*Canceled in Cleveland, an artist's police violence drawings come to Mass MoCA*, The Boston Globe, Malcolm Gay, August 25, 2020

*After controversial cancellation in Cleveland, Mass MoCA will exhibit Shaun Leonardo's images of Black victims*, The Art Newspaper, Nancy Kenney, August 24, 2020

*Artist Shaun Leonardo Wants to Expand the Conversation on Police Brutality Through His Work*, WYNC, The Takeaway, Tanzina Vega, July 1, 2020

*Artist whose exhibition on police brutality was abruptly canceled in February says institutions must do better*, Ananda Pellerin, CNN Style, June 24, 2020

*A Museum Canceled a Show About Police Brutality. Here's the Art*, Brian Boucher, The New York Times, pg. C4, June 10, 2020

*Shaun Leonardo: The Breath of Empty Space*, Louis Block, The Brooklyn Rail, March 2020

*Silence Speaking Volumes: Artists Confront the Culture of Incarceration*, Siddhartha Mitter, The New York Times, Aug. 1, 2019

*Moving Eric Garner's Memory from Mind to Body*, Rebecca Carroll, WNYC, July 17, 2019

*Mirror/Echo/Tilt*, Alison Stewart, "All of It," WNYC, July 11, 2019

*How Three Artists are Taking on the Crisis of Mass Incarceration*, Sara Roffino, Cultured, June 21, 2019

*How the Museum is Like a Prison*, Kyle Croft, Hyperallergic, Nov. 26, 2018

*"These Works Will Haunt You." The Chart: Anthology 2017-2018*, edited by Jenna Crowder, The Chart, October 2018, pp. 56-73

*Can an Artist Shift the Gun Debate*, Meredith Mendelsohn, The New York Times, pg. C6, June 22, 2018

*Can Calcio Storico, an Ultraviolent Ancient Italian Sport, Help Heal Our Political Divides?*

*Artist Shaun Leonardo Thinks So*, Tim Schneider, artnet News, June 21, 2018

*Editors' Picks: 17 Things Not to Miss...*, Sarah Cascone, artnet News, June 18, 2018

*Scrimmage art exhibit tackles the culture of football*, CBS News, Oct. 14, 2017

*Practice Makes Perfect*, Alex Fialho, Artforum, April 28, 2017

*A New Arts Program Offers an Alternative to Incarceration...*, Brian Boucher, artnet News, Feb. 14, 2017

*The Most Memorable Artworks of 2016*, Brian Boucher, artnet News, Dec. 19, 2016

*How to Safely Defend Yourself From Police Brutality*, Donovan X. Ramsey, Complex News, Dec. 14, 2016

*Editors Picks*, Sarah Cascone, artnet News, Nov 8, 2016

*Bringing Self-Defense Performance Art into the Community*, Joel Kuennen, Art Slant, February, 23, 2016

*Between History and the Body' is a Damned Good Show*, Jessica Dawson, Village Voice, Aug. 11, 2015

*Local Heroes*, Peter Schjeldahl, The New Yorker, October 20, 2014

#### **SELECTED PUBLICATIONS:**

Strike Fast, Dance Lightly: Artists on Boxing, exhibition catalog, The Church, The Flag Art Foundation, Norton Museum of Art, Gregory R. Miller & Co., 2025, pg. 32

*"On Reverence and Spiritual Reckonings,"* Michelle D. Commander, Reckoning: Protest. Defiance. Resilience., National Museum of African American History & Culture, Rizzoli Electa, 2024, pg. 148.

*"Museum as Nexus: How to cultivate community engagement through artist-powered platforms."* Museum Metamorphosis: Cultivating Change Through Cultural Citizenship, nico wheaton, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers / American Alliance of Museums, 2022, pp. 11-32.

*"Self-Portraiture."* David Driskell: Icons of Nature and History, edited by Jessica May, Rizzoli Electa, 2021, pp. 78-80.

*Dossier #3: Division of Time*, edited by Nico Wheaton and David van Der Leer, DSDL DD, March 2021

*Creative Futures: On Anti-Racist Somatic Work*, Ford Foundation, <https://www.fordfoundation.org/campaigns/creative-futures/?popup=14765>, January 2021

*Critical Communion: On Refusal & Better Questions*, edited by Jenna Crowder, The Chart, Vol. 5, No. 3, <https://thechart.me/on-refusal-better-questions/>, Summer 2020

*"The Eulogy" and Mirror/Echo/Tilt."* Wall Turned Sideways: Artists Confront the Justice System,

edited by Risa Puleo, exhibition catalog, Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, pp. 252-255, 388-394.  
*Mirror/Echo/Tilt*, Melanie Crean, Shaun Leonardo and Sable Elyse Smith, exhibition catalog and curriculum, Pacific, 2019  
“I am an Invisible Man.” *Second Sight: The Paradox of Vision in Contemporary Art*, edited by Ellen Y. Tani, Scala Arts Publisher and the Bowdoin College Museum of Art, 2018, pp. 84-85.  
Vector Artists Journal #8, June 2018  
“Self-Portrait fight.” *Snöfrid #0*, performance manual, Tensta Konsthall, November 2007, pp. 102-119.

#### **SELECTED VISITING ARTIST LECTURES / PANELS:**

Pratt Institute, visiting critic, 12/5/25  
The Bronx Museum of the Arts, AIM Fellowship seminar, 12/2/25  
Work Shouldn’t Suck, Socrates Sculpture Park: Exploring Art, Community, and Experimentation (EP.83), podcast with Katie Dixon, 5/14/25  
Whoop Dee Doo: On Community Engagement & Contemporary Art, panel with Guadalupe Maravilla, Jamel Mims and WHOOP DEE DOO, moderated by Caits Meissner, 5/10/25  
NADA x The Clemente, Historias, panel, 5/8/25  
Pratt Institute, visiting critic, 12/2/24  
Arizona State University, virtual lecture and workshop, 2/16/22  
Bowdoin College, virtual lecture and workshop, 10/18/22  
Art World Learning, *The Future of Leadership*, with Allison Weisberg, 6/8/21  
NYFA, *Blacklist: Considering the Role of Activism in Art*, virtual panel with Derek Fordjour & Dread Scott, 5/24/21  
University of Houston, *Policing, Performance, and the Question of Reform*, Shaun Leonardo & UH Police Chief Ceaser Moore, 5/20/21  
SAIC, visiting artist, virtual, 3/26/21  
University of Pittsburgh, Hesselbein Lecture on Leadership, 2/19/21  
California State University galleries and museums, *Platform*, presented by ConSortiUm, virtual lecture, 2/11/21  
MASS MoCA, *InSession*, panel with Nick Cave, Steve Locke, Xaviera Simmons, M. Carmen Lane, Dr. Kalima Young, virtual, 12/10/20  
Art Funders Forum, panel discussion, 12/8/20  
Temple School of Art & Architecture, visiting artist, virtual, 11/17/20  
Materials for the Arts *Race, Art & Identity: A Conversation with Shaun Leonardo*, virtual, 7/16//20  
The Brooklyn Rail, *83rd New Social Environment conversation*, virtual, 7/10/20  
Artnet Talks: *A Conversation with Shaun Leonardo, Dread Scott, and Clifford Owens on Art as an Act of Resistance*, virtual, 6/24/20  
Tufts University, *Walls Turned Sideways symposium*, workshop and keynote, Boston, MA, 3/5/20  
University of Houston, visiting artist, Houston, TX, 2/5/20  
University of Western Michigan, visiting artist, Kalamazoo, MI, 11/18/19  
Tufts University, *Acting Up*, MFA colloquium, Boston, MA, 10/7/19  
Tufts University, visiting artist, Boston, MA, 10/7/19  
University of New Hampshire Museum of Art, visiting artist, Durham, NH, 3/20/19  
Transylvania University, visiting artist, Lexington, Kentucky, 2/27/19  
Kenyon College, visiting artist, Gambier, OH, 1/28/19  
Art for Justice, convening and presentation, New Orleans, LA, 11/29/18  
Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland, *Testimony* performance and town hall, Cleveland, OH, 11/10/18  
Milwaukee Art Museum, *Envisioning the Role of the Arts in Criminal Justice Reform*, symposium and workshop, Milwaukee, WI, 11/2/18  
Brown University, visiting artist, Providence, RI, 10/3/18  
Whitney Museum, Vector #8 journal launch & performance, New York, NY, 6/22/18

Marymount Manhattan College, visiting artist, New York, NY, 5/17/18

Colby College Museum of Art, visiting artist, Waterville, ME, 2/2/18

**PUBLIC COLLECTIONS:**

JP Morgan Chase, New York, NY

Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Washington DC

Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore MD

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA

El Museo del Barrio, New York, NY

Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation, New York, NY

Portland Museum of Art, Portland, ME

University of New Hampshire Museum of Art, Durham, NH

Bowdoin Museum of Art, Brunswick, ME

KADIST Video Library, San Francisco, CA

**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:**

Socrates Sculpture Park, Executive Director, Long Island City, NY. 2026-present

Socrates Sculpture Park, Co-Director, Long Island City, NY. 2024-2025

Recess, Co-Director, Brooklyn, NY, 2021-present

Pratt Institute, School of Art, Visiting Artist Fellowship, Brooklyn, NY, 2018-2020

SUNY Purchase, School of the Arts, Adjunct Professor, Purchase, New York, NY, 2017-2018

New Museum, School, Youth, and Community Programs Manager, New York, NY, 2015-2017

Socrates Sculpture Park, Director of Public Programs, Long Island City, New York, 2010-2015