TO BE A WITNESS: LYNCHING AND POSTMEMORY IN LASHAWNDA CROWE STORM'S
"HER NAME WAS LAURA NELSON"

Viola Ratcliffe

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Committee:
Allison Terry-Fritsch, Advisor
Rebecca L. Skinner Greene
ABSTRACT

Allison Terry-Fritsch, Advisor

The literal reframing of the lynching postcard *The Lynching of Laura Nelson* within the medium of quilting allows for a visual re-contextualization of this image’s history. In LaShawnda Crowe Storm’s *Quilt I: Her Name Was Laura Nelson* the confrontation between viewers and the lynched body of an African American woman addresses an often neglected phenomenon, the lynching of black women in the United States during the late 19th and early 20th century. The literal reframing of the lynching postcard *The Lynching of Laura Nelson* within the medium of quilting allows for a visual re-contextualization of this image’s history. In the act of quilting Crowe Storm has removed this image from its original intention, a form of propaganda used to fuel racist ideology, and has now placed it within a context of feminism, activism, and communal art making. The selection of the medium of quilting in this work was intentional. In quilting LaShawnda Crowe Storm situates the work, and its attendant imagery, within a dialogue regarding female identity, the construction of community and the history of racial violence in the United States.

As a community leader and activist in the city of Indianapolis, Indiana, LaShawnda Crowe Storm developed The Lynch Quilts Project as a means to bring people from across the country together to have an honest dialogue about the legacy of lynching and racial violence in the United States. The project was developed in 2004 and is a twenty-first century quilting collective that has manifested into a social justice movement. This paper investigates the strategies by which LaShawnda Crowe Storm’s *Her Name Was Laura Nelson* engages viewers to
construct an ethical relationship with the history of lynching in the United States and fosters the production of postmemory. Coined by the Holocaust scholar Marianne Hirsch,

“Postmemory describes the relationship that the generation after those who witnessed cultural or collective trauma bears to the experiences of those who came before, experiences that they can ‘remember’ only by the means of the stories, images and behaviors among which they grew up. But these experiences were transmitted to them so deeply that they seem to constitute memories in their own right.”

As this essay argues, Crowe Storm’s appropriation of the lynch photograph of Laura Nelson into the artistic form of a quilted textile enables this often unspoken history to be transmitted generationally. By analyzing this history of racial violence through the lens of postmemory, readers will not only have a greater perception of why this type of violence continues to manifest on modern society, but also the ramifications that racial violence continues to have today.
This thesis is dedicated to my family.
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INTRODUCTION

LaShawnda Crowe Storm’s *Quilt I: Her Name Was Laura Nelson* (Fig. 1) stages a confrontation between viewers and the lynched body of an African American woman. As the focal point of the quilt, the large black and white image—appropriated from the lynch postcard, *The Lynching of Laura Nelson* (Fig. 2)—addresses an often neglected subject, the lynching of African American women in the United States during the late 19th and early 20th century.¹ The original postcard depicts the body of Laura Nelson being hung by a noose from the Canadian River Bridge in Okemah, Oklahoma on May 25, 1911, as dozens of onlookers stood upon the bridge for the chance to view Nelson’s lynched body. LaShawnda Crowe Storm’s quilted image of Laura Nelson, composed of 140 5 x 5 inch quilt squares, does not contain all of the visual elements that appear in the original photograph. Crowe Storm purposely excluded the images of the bridge and the Canadian River so that the viewer may solely focus on the details of Laura Nelson, from the patterning of her dress to the wedding ring on her left hand.

The literal reframing of the lynching postcard *The Lynching of Laura Nelson* within the medium of quilting allows for a visual re-contextualization of this image’s history. In the act of quilting Crowe Storm has removed this image from its original intention, a form of propaganda used to fuel racist ideology, and has now placed it within a context of feminism, activism, and communal art making. The selection of the medium of quilting in this work was intentional. In quilting LaShawnda Crowe Storm situates the work, and its attendant imagery, within a dialogue regarding female identity, the construction of community and the history of racial violence in the United States. As a community leader and activist in the city of Indianapolis, Indiana,

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LaShawnda Crowe Storm (Fig. 3) uses her work to “create a space and place for difficult conversations.”

From its onset, LaShawnda Crowe Storm’s The Lynch Quilts Project has established itself as a means to bring people from across the country together to have an honest dialogue about the legacy of lynching and racial violence in the United States. The project was developed in 2004 and is a twenty-first century quilting collective that has manifested into a social justice movement. Its purpose is to create a greater understanding of the history of lynching in the United States and its ramifications. The Lynch Quilts Project encounters this history within the realms of “collective memory, gender, healing, memorial, politics, and communal conflict.” It is community oriented and uses the help of volunteer quilters and other contributors to complete its many quilts. Many participants contact Crowe Storm via The Lynch Quilt Project website and its Facebook page to volunteer their time and donations. Volunteers from around the country send in materials and fabric to aid in the construction of these art works, and members of the project will even quilt together during The Lynch Quilt Project’s community sewing days. There are six quilts in The Lynch Quilts Project; *Quilt I: Her Name Was Laura Nelson* (2004), *Quilt II: RedRum Summer 1919* (2014), *Quilt III: A Partial Listing*, *Quilt IV: (TBA)*, *Quilt V: Pinky’s Legacy/ The Making Quilt*, and *Quilt VI: Memoria in Progress* (Fig. 5-9). The remaining five quilts are thematically similar to *Quilt I* in that they each address issues of race, memory, feminism, violence, memorial and activism. However, unlike *Her Name Was Laura Nelson*, the other works neither incorporate photography nor do they specifically address the lynching of African American women.

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This paper investigates the strategies by which LaShawnda Crowe Storm’s *Her Name Was Laura Nelson* engages viewers to construct an ethical relationship with the history of lynching in the United States and fosters the production of postmemory. Coined by the Holocaust scholar Mirianne Hirsch, “postmemory” is the inheritance of past events or experiences of who witnessed them, by the generation that follows. As Hirsch has argued, “Postmemory describes the relationship that the generation after those who witnessed cultural or collective trauma bears to the experiences of those who came before, experiences that they can ‘remember’ only by the means of the stories, images and behaviors among which they grew up. But these experiences were transmitted to them so deeply that they seem to constitute memories in their own right.”

Postmemory’s ability to be “a structure of inter- and trans-generational transmission of knowledge and experience” is reflected in the communal art making that is intrinsic to The Lynch Quilts Project and *Her Name Was Laura Nelson*. In the more than ten years since the project’s establishment, LaShawnda Crowe Storm continues to elicit participation from the public by hosting group sewing at Indianapolis community centers that are open to the public. Crowe Storm also actively exhibits the completed quilts in public venues, including universities, churches, airports and public libraries. In both the creation and exhibition of Crowe Storm’s quilts lies an element of “transmission,” which involves both a spoken and unspoken exchange of experience and knowledge from individuals that exist within the spectrum of this second generation. Although the experience and knowledge shared amongst those that participated in the making of *Quilt I: Her Name Was Laura Nelson* may differ greatly than the experience and knowledge shared amongst those who have only viewed the quilt in exhibitions, the image of

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6 Ibid.
7 Ibid. 106.
Laura Nelson provides insight into the reality of black women and lynching in the United States amongst both groups.

As this essay argues, Crowe Storm’s appropriation of the lynch photograph of Laura Nelson into the artistic form of a quilted textile enables this often unspoken history to be transmitted generationally. I consider LaShawnda Crowe Storm’s use of the image of Laura Nelson as an exercise in appropriation. Understanding that this term can be problematic, I wish to clarify what I mean by it. In terms of this thesis, appropriation refers to LaShawnda Crowe Storm’s intentional use of an already existing image (the lynch postcard of Laura Nelson) into an original artwork (*Quilt I* of The Lynch Quilts Project). In placing the image within her work, Crowe Storm places it within another context.8 Robert S. Nelson has written about the proliferation of appropriation within works of art by comparing it to myth.9 “Appropriation,” states Nelson, “like myth, is a distortion, not a negation of the prior semiotic assemblage.”10 Likewise, LaShawnda Crowe Storm’s appropriation of the photograph *The Lynching of Laura Nelson* within *Her Name Was Laura Nelson* does not negate the message of racism and racial hatred that the original photograph conveyed; instead it reframes this message so as to place it within the context of advocacy, community, and memorial. As Hirsch has argued,

“To be sure, the history of the Holocaust has come down to us, in subsequent generations, through a vast number of photographic images meticulously taken by perpetrators eager to record their actions and also by bystanders, often clandestinely, by victims…Photography’s promise to offer an access to the event itself, and its easy

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8 It is LaShawnda Crowe Storm’s preference to not apply the term appropriation to her work, as she feels it takes away from the meaning of *Quilt I: Her Name Was Laura Nelson*; to honor Laura Nelson and all victims of lynching. I use the term appropriation to refer to what I consider to be the most compelling aspect of *Quilt I: Her Name Was Laura Nelson*, its ability to simultaneously be viewed as an image of racial degradation and social justice advocacy.


10 Ibid.
assumption of iconic and symbolic power, makes it a uniquely powerful medium for the transmission of events that remain unimaginable.”

To the youngest members of lynching’s second (or third or fourth) generation(s), the idea of a black man, woman, or child being hanged by a noose for public display may indeed seem “unimaginable.” However Her Name Was Laura Nelson serves as powerful evidence that lynchings did occur. In 1919, 237 people were lynched in Phillips County, Arkansas during a race riot and between 1887-1950, 54 people were lynched Caddo Parish, Louisiana alone. The NAACP reports that from 1885-1930, 147 people were lynched in Oklahoma, with 50 of these victims being black. Lynchings in Oklahoma occurred in two phases. The first phase took place from 1885-1907 during which period the majority of lynchings were of white “highwaymen” or thieves accused of criminal activity. The second phase of lynchings occurred after Oklahoma was granted statehood in 1907, at which time the motivations behind lynching became more racially driven. Fewer lynchings occurred during this period, but the vast majority of victims were black. By the end of the lynching era, Oklahoma only ranked 13th in the nation in total number of lynch victims.

African American Studies scholar Arlene Keizer expounds upon the theory of postmemory applying it specifically to the African American female experience, in what she defines as African American postmemory. According to Keizer, this form of postmemory

11 Ibid. 107, 108.
14 Ibid.
15 Ibid.
16 Ibid.
17 Ibid.
refers to “the secondary memory of extended relationships in which white masters sexually dominated enslaved women.” She goes on to write that, when African American artists and writers allow the sexually subjugated African American woman to “speak the imagined conditions of her existence” through representations in visual art and literature, “it provides a skeleton key to our current obsession with American slavery.”

The addition of donors’ baby bibs, spiritual paraphernalia, and even wedding dresses into the white quilt squares of *Her Name Was Laura Nelson*, adds an additional narrative that in some ways can convey as profound a message as the lynch image itself (Fig. 10). The inclusion of these pieces places this work within Arlene Keizer’s definition of African American postmemory. The addition of donated fabrics also enables this work to “speak the imagined conditions” of Laura Nelson’s existence, while also “providing viewers with a skeleton key” to the black female experience with lynching.

The denial of black women’s history can be traced to American slavery, and black scholars like bell hooks have avidly declared that the oppression of black women during slavery has been largely ignored by historians and scholars alike due to their “unwillingness to seriously examine the impact that sexist and racist oppression” has had on black women’s social status.

Because the majority of lynchings were of men, an ideology regarding the lynching of black women was never widely declared. By appropriating the lynching image of Laura Nelson into the body of a quilt, LaShawnda Crowe Storm and members of The Lynch Quilts Project create a platform for which this history can be publically addressed across generational, gender, and socio-economical boundaries.

It is in the act of quilting that LaShawnda Crowe Storm’s *Her Name Was Laura Nelson* falls within the parameters of African American postmemory, because it is through the quilting

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19 Ibid.
20 Ibid.
of Laura Nelson’s lynching photograph that Crowe Storm and the many Lynch Quilts Project’s participants give agency to this image. In their act of communal art making, the project’s participants lend their own voices to this art piece and enable *Her Name Was Laura Nelson* to evoke Arlene Keizer’s definition of postmemory by speaking to the “imagined conditions” of Laura Nelson’s life, while also providing viewers with a means to explore their own curiosity of the black female experience with lynching. In this way the legacy of Laura Nelson becomes greater than the circumstances surrounding her death, and allows *Her Name Was Laura Nelson* to then become a memorial to Laura Nelson and the countless other victims—men, women, and children—of lynching and racial violence in the United States.

This thesis consists of three primary sections that place *Her Name Was Laura Nelson* in the context of African American visual culture, community, and postmemory. Part I provides insight into the rich tradition of quiltmaking in the African American community, and analyzes the ways in which The Lynch Quilts Project and Crowe Storm’s *Her Name Was Laura Nelson* fall within the canon of African American quiltmaking and within the framework of postmemory. Part II sets a foundation regarding the history of American lynching postcards and photographs and the contemporary art practice of reclaiming—appropriating—racially depredating photographs specifically focusing on the works of black female artists. Lastly, Part III examines the relationship between memorial and postmemory within *Her Name Was Laura Nelson*. I will analyze the ways in which this artwork serves as a memorial to Laura Nelson and all victims of lynching, while also placing it within a context of other lynching memorials, including Meta Warrick Fuller’s *Mary Turner: A Silent Protest Against Mob Violence* (1919)\(^22\)

and the *Clayton, Jackson, McGhie Memorial* (2003) in Duluth, Minnesota. Each of the three sections expounds upon the theory of postmemory as it relates to The Lynch Quilts Project and more specifically LaShawnda Crowe Storm’s *Quilt I: Her Name Was Laura Nelson*. It is my intention to provide the reader with a greater understanding of how the art form of quilting allows for a more didactic understanding of community, memory, and healing in regards the analysis of black women’s bearing witness to lynching in the United States. Furthermore, by analyzing this history of racial violence through the lens of postmemory, readers will not only have a greater perception of why this type of violence continues to manifest on modern society, but also the ramifications that racial violence continues to have today.

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CHAPTER I:
DEFYING THE CONSTRUCTED NARRATIVE: POSTMEMORY AND AFRICAN
AMERICAN QUILTMAKING IN *HER NAME WAS LAURA NELSON*

The American quilting aesthetic was born out of both European and African textile traditions and the influences of these traditions are present not only in the aesthetics of *Her Name Was Laura Nelson*, but also in the methods behind its creation. Despite the scant documented evidence of quilts in the United States prior to 1750, it is believed that early American quilting styles were adapted from European traditions. According to quilt scholar Elise Schebler, early colonial quilts integrated many English quilting styles, including the medallion, appliqué, piecing, and embroidery. Advancements in technology greatly impacted the American textile industry, particularly with the invention of the cotton gin in 1793. Invented by Eli Whitney, the cotton gin revolutionized the production of American textiles by dramatically reducing the cost of cotton, thereby making it widely available to the American middle class.

The cotton gin also revolutionized American slavery, creating a greater demand for field slaves, who would have picked the cotton. When African slaves arrived in the Americas many harbored a great cultural knowledge of their art making, particularly the art of textiles. As Maude Wahlman suggests, West and Central African textiles strongly influenced early African American quilting techniques, particularly in the use of appliqué, patchwork, asymmetrical patterning, vertical strips, and bright colors. Evidence of patchwork can be found in the quilted

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27 Ibid.
armor of the Hausa people of Nigeria, Chad, and Sudan, and in the appliquéd banners of the Dahomey people of Benin, banners that are “acknowledged as history preserved in fabric” (Fig. 11-12).

Similar to the appliquéd banners of the Dahomey, Quilt I: Her Name Was Laura Nelson is also history preserved in fabric. Quilt I was created communally with a group of ten quilters hailing from The Needles and Thread Quilters Guild Chicago. These ten quilters consisted of both men and women who routinely met at the Chicago Historical Society, along with LaShawnda Crowe Storm; to complete the quilting of Her Name Was Laura Nelson. It is from this collective that The Lynch Quilts Project was formed. Quilting collectives like The Lynch Quilts Project have maintained an active role in the preservation of women’s histories. Bernice Seinbaum, has even remarked that quilting bees were quite possibly “the first feminist consciousness raising group.” Floris Barnett Cash writes about the importance of quilting bees as a way for slaves to “liberate themselves from an oppressive environment.” These gatherings, also referred to as frolics, were one of the few opportunities for enslaved men and women to gather socially outside of the slaveholder’s supervision. Writing about the ability of quilting to serve as an emotional outlet for enslaved women, Gladys Marie-Fry argues that enslaved “unconsciously left careful records of the emotional and psychological well-being on each

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32 LaShawnda Crowe Storm, interview by Viola Ratcliffe, October 10, 2014, Indianapolis, IN.
33 Ibid.
34 Mazloomi, *Spirits of the Cloth*, 144.
36 Ibid.
surviving quilt.” According to Marie-Fry, the length and evenness of a quilt’s stitches may be an indication of inner harmony. Likewise, patterns that deviated from these types of stitches may indicate the “harboring of physical and emotional wounds.”

The Lynch Quilts Project is just one of the many quilting collectives that have aligned themselves with human rights and social justice campaigns. When women were discouraged from taking part in anti-slavery campaigns of the 1800s, it was through quilting that many were able to lend their support. Abolitionist women organized quilting bazaars and used the profits to fund the Underground Railroad, abolitionist newspapers, and female anti-slavery societies. In 1965, The Freedom Quilting Bee fostered economic equality by providing black women in the economically deprived Wilcox County, Alabama an opportunity to go into business for themselves. The development of The Freedom Quilting Bee was spurned by Reverend Francis X. Walter, an Episcopalian priest who had grown up in Mobile, Alabama. Father Walter first encountered the quilts of Gee’s Bend in December 1965, while travelling through Wilcox County, Alabama. Drawn to their dynamic colors and bold patterns, he purchased many of the quilts to sell at quilt auctions in New York City. Father Walter was convinced that the profits from the quilt sales could not only benefit the Wilcox County branch of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, but that they could also provide the women of Gee’s Bend with an alternative to subsistence-based farming. Over time the women of Gee’s Bend built the collective into an economic powerhouse, doubling their annual incomes through the sales of their quilts.

37 Marie-Fry, *Stitched from the Soul*, 1.
38 Ibid.
39 Ibid.
40 Cash, “Kinship and Quilting,” 32.
42 Ibid. 6-7.
43 Ibid. 7
44 Ibid. 7
45 Ibid. 14
quilts.\textsuperscript{46} The popularity of the Gee’s Bend quilts led to their eventual sale at the department stores of Sears Roebuck and Bloomingdales,\textsuperscript{47} and their exhibition in the institutions of the Whitney Museum and the Mobile Museum of Fine Art (Fig. 13).\textsuperscript{48}

Much like the Freedom Quilting Bee, LaShawnda Crowe Storm’s vision was not to create art for art’s sake, but to rather create a space where art and activism could intersect. As a community leader and activist in the city of Indianapolis, LaShawnda Crowe Storm (Fig. 3) uses her art to “create a space and place for difficult conversations.”\textsuperscript{49} An accomplished sculptor, who earned her MFA in 2004 from the Art Institute of Chicago, LaShawnda Crowe Storm did not begin her career as a professional artist.\textsuperscript{50} After earning her Bachelor Degree in Communication and English Literature from the University of Michigan, she pursued a career in social work, working with various community programs and volunteer organizations, including Youth Communications: Metro Atlanta in Atlanta Georgia.\textsuperscript{51} It was also during this period that Crowe Storm began to enroll in continuing education art classes to “scratch an intellectual curiosity.”\textsuperscript{52} In the summer of 1997, Crowe Storm left her job to embark on a journey; hiking across the United States. During her travels, Crowe Storm contemplated whether she should pursue a career as an artist or a social worker. She ultimately decided that the answer was not to forsake one goal for the other but rather to combine the two, which she explains, stating:

“In the end, I chose two paths. For what I discovered is that my art is my social work.

I don’t believe that my art can change the world, but I can at least influence the dialogues

\textsuperscript{47}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{48}Ibid. 20-21
\textsuperscript{49}LaShawnda Crowe Storm, “Biography” (unpublished manuscript, January 12, 2015), Microsoft Word file.
\textsuperscript{50}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{51}LaShawnda Crowe Storm, phone interview by Viola Ratcliffe, June 18, 2015.
\textsuperscript{52}“The Accidental Artist,” LaShawnda Crowe Storm, June 15, 2015, \url{http://www.lashawndacrowestorm.com/#?biography/c1enr}. 
around me. And during these conversations help individuals down a more healed, conscientious, and tolerant future which ultimately impacts society.”

Upon returning from travelling the United States, Crowe Storm enrolled as a post baccalaureate BFA student at Georgia State University under the tutelage of contemporary artist Larry Walker. Walker, who served as the director of Georgia State University’s School of Art and Design for 11 years, is also the father of renowned contemporary artist Kara Walker, best known for her black paper silhouette cutouts that explore themes of race, gender, power, sexuality, history, and repression. Crowe Storm credits artists Larry Walker and Preston Jackson as being influential to her work and her decision to become an artist. She explains that while it was Larry Walker’s validation of her work and encouragement that influenced her decision to pursue a career as an artist, it was Preston Jackson who acted as a mentor to her during her time at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

LaShawnda Crowe Storm had not explored the medium of quilting prior to developing The Lynch Quilts Project, and to learn to quilt LaShawnda Crowe Storm worked with members of the Needles and Threads Quilting Guild Chicago, as well as with quilters in Indianapolis. The project was initially established for the purpose of completing Quilt I: Her Name Was Laura Nelson. However it soon became clear that to fulfill its purpose, The Lynch Quilt’s Project would need to grow. This led Crowe Storm to embark on a letter writing campaign, soliciting

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53 Ibid.
54 LaShawnda Crowe Storm, interview by Viola Ratcliffe, October 10, 2014, Indianapolis, IN.
57 LaShawnda Crowe Storm, phone interview by Viola Ratcliffe, June 18, 2015.
support from quilters and quilting groups across the United States. 58 Crowe Storm’s selection of quilting as the medium for this project was intentional. She explains:

“Quilting is the ideal choice to explore this history because of the great metaphors [the] quilting process personifies and the communal aspect of quiltmaking. Quilts and the quilting process epitomize reclamation and discovery. Quilting is about piecing together remnants of fabric and lost history, reclaiming tossed garments and forgotten lives, stitching together all of these fragments into a whole cloth that reflects a more balanced and total view of history, revealing multiple truths along the way.” 59

The Lynch Quilts Project is one of several contemporary quilting cooperatives that are simultaneously working within and redefining the African American quilting aesthetic. Since its founding in 1992, the African American quilting cooperative Needles and Thread Quilters Guild Chicago continues to gather to promote the art of quilting and share ideas, all while supporting the community through their art. 60 Located in Chicago, Illinois, the cooperative was essential to the establishment of The Lynch Quilts Project, as it was Needles and Thread Quilters Guild members who initially lent their talents and resources to the completion of Quilt I: Her Name Was Laura Nelson. 61

Likewise, The Women of Color Quilter’s Network is a contemporary quilting cooperative that seeks to “foster and preserve the art of quiltmaking among women of color.” 62 It was founded in 1985 by author, quilter and quilt historian Carolyn Mazloomi, and its members often

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58 “The Project: An Overview.”
59 Ibid.
61 Ibid.
take part in quilting projects that aid social and economic projects. The network frequently
develops exhibitions featuring quilts of its members that are hosted in museums and institutions
across the United States and around the world. In 2013, the Network collaborated with the
Michigan State University Museum to develop the exhibit *Conscience of the Human Spirit: The
Life of Nelson Mandela.* The exhibit featured quilts created by both African American and
South African artists honoring the South African leader and opened at the International Quilt
Convention Africa in Johannesburg, South Africa in July 2014.

The Needles and Threads Quilters Guild Chicago, the Women of Color Quilting
Network, and The Lynch Quilts Project are representations of art and activism at work. All three
collectives are actively invested in using the art of quilting to benefit their communities by
bringing awareness to issues that directly affect them. In fact, the greatest difference between the
prior collectives and The Lynch Quilts Project is that the quilters of Needles and Threads
Quilters Guild Chicago and of the Women of Color Quilting Network are not quilting to
advocate for a single cause or purpose. Unlike The Lynch Quilts Project, their quilts can vary
greatly thematically, resulting in a plethora of styles, patterns, materials, and themes being
explored in the quilts associated with these collectives. And while the quilts of The Lynch Quilts
Project may be created by a collective of quilters, each quilt is designed by Crowe Storm and
falls within her vision for the project.

My desire to work with and research this project is largely because of my personal
investment in creating dialog around this history. My familiarity with quilts started during

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65 Ibid.
childhood and the first quilt I ever received was from my Aunt’s mother, a lifelong quilter from Jackson, Mississippi. The large patchwork quilt was pieced together using various re-purposed fabrics to create a vibrant collection of colors and patterns representing all the things that I enjoyed most as a child. Looking at this quilt not only brings forth memories of my childhood, but also of my adulthood, when the quilt lined my bed in my dorm room, warming my feet while I studied. The second quilt that I was given came from artist Patricia Batiste-Brown when I was the Curator Specialist for the Troy University Rosa Parks Museum in Montgomery, Alabama. Batiste-Brown had grown up in Montgomery, Alabama and in 2011 the museum hosted a solo exhibit of her quilts. When Pat Batiste-Brown passed away shortly after the closing of her exhibit, it was her quilts that continued her legacy. No longer just appreciated for their visual beauty and artistic craftsmanship, these quilts became a memorial to her life and artistry.

Quilting can be an autobiographical experience and, like the pages of a family photo album, each quilt pattern and piece of fabric provides insight into a quilter’s past. The integration of fabric once belonging to a quilter’s family and friends into the pattern of a quilt, can serve as a powerful aid in recalling past memories. Like photographs of the past, the inclusion of these cherished fabrics can shape our thoughts and memories regarding our previous moments and experiences. In providing a powerful link to our past, quilts also become an invaluable resource for future generations. In preserving the memories and legacy of an individual or a collective within their blocks, quilts can profoundly influence the understanding of one’s history. LaShawnda Crowe Storm’s Her Name Was Laura Nelson, expounds upon this significance by creating a quilt that honors the memory and legacy of Laura Nelson while also defying the constructed historical narrative on lynching in the United States. In focusing on the lesser known history of the lynching of black women, Crowe Storm intentionally undermines any notion that
lynching was solely a threat to black males and gives credence to the lynching experience of black women.
CHAPTER II:

REFRAMING THE NARRATIVE: Lynching, Appropriation and

HER NAME WAS LAURA NELSON

LaShawnda Crowe Storm’s *Her Name Was Laura Nelson* defies the constructed historical narrative on lynching in the United States because it does not focus on the well known history of the lynching of black men, but instead focuses on the lesser known history of the lynching of black women. Much like postmemory, the art of quilting is typically passed down generationally, similar to a rite of passage. Alabama quilter Nora Ezell has written that she watched her mother quilt as a child, and credits her “Aunt Tony” and her sisters with garnering her interest in quilting as an adult. Fabric artist and painter Faith Ringgold also learned to quilt from the women in her family, specifically her mother, Willi Posey, who was a renowned fashion designer in 1930’s Harlem. LaShawnda Crowe Storm’s methodology in developing the Lynch Quilts Project did not begin as a generationally passed down tradition, but rather as an exploration into the United States’ history of racial disparity. The value of quilts lies not only in their beauty and mastery, but also in their ability to forge connections between artists and viewers alike. Indeed, Marianne Hirsch writes that the power of postmemory lies in its ability to connect multiple generations to an object through “projection, investment and creation.” *Quilt
I: Her Name Was Laura Nelson* provides both viewers and quilters an opportunity to project, invest, and create in efforts to reclaim the history that surrounds black women and lynching in the United States, and places this history in the forefront of viewers’ consciousness.

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A lynching occurs when “three people or more, outside the legal system, kill someone accused of a crime or offense.”70 Lynching data suggests that far fewer black women were killed by lynch mobs than men, however the number of deaths of black women is significant.71 Of the 3513 African Americans that were lynched from 1882-1927, 76 of them were women.72 During the years of 1880-1930, also referred to as the “lynching era,” the lynching of African Americans became a more frequent occurrence, particularly in the southern United States.73 Prior to this period, most lynchings that occurred in the United States were attributed to vigilante justice, occurring in the frontier areas and involving white victims as well as black.74 Although lynchings of black men and women were perpetrated in response to an accusation of a crime being committed, in actuality lynching was implemented as a means for whites to control the black labor force.75 Following slavery, many poor whites greatly “resented the prospect of competing for jobs with black laborers, and having to witness the economic successes of black tenant farmers.”76 According to many scholars and activists, lynching was not only a means of domestic terrorism, it was also a form of “economic warfare,” one that instilled white supremacy and reinforced a racial hierarchy within society.77

Lynching was never declared a Federal crime despite numerous attempts to do so by anti-lynching activists and politicians.78 By the late 1800s, occurrences of lynching had become so

72 Ibid.
74 White, Rope and Faggot, 71.
76 Ibid.
77 Shawn Michelle Smith, “The Evidence of Lynching,” 15.
frequent that President William McKinley publically voiced his support for an anti-lynching bill in Ohio, which was his home state, stating that “lynchings must not be tolerated in a great and civilized country like the United States.”

Because lynchings were considered to be an “ordinary crime” and not a Federal one, it was up to the individual States to prosecute anyone accused of taking part in a lynch mob. Because of the inability or unwillingness of local law enforcement to prevent these occurrences, lynchings often went unprosecuted and their participants unpunished.

Laura Nelson was not the only black woman to be lynched in the United States, nor was she the only black woman to have her child killed alongside her. Perhaps one of the most heinous was the lynching of Mary Turner. On May 19, 1918, a lynch mob of several men in Valdosta, Georgia killed Turner after she vowed to serve arrest warrants to the men who lynched her husband. At the time of her murder, Turner was eight months pregnant. After dousing her body with gasoline, Turner’s killers then turned a knife to her womb, causing her unborn child to fall from her body onto the ground. It was then that one of the lynch men, using the heel of his shoe, stomped on the fallen child. As a final act, the mob riddled Turner’s body with bullets, until she was no longer recognizable.

The circumstances that led to the lynching of Laura Nelson were indicative of the deeply seated racism that was present in her community of Okemah, Oklahoma. Since the town’s establishment in 1902, Okemah had been racially segregated, forcing black residents to live

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79 Ibid.
81 “Lynching.”
82 Apel, Imagery of Lynching, 151.
83 Ibid.
84 White, Rope and Faggot, 21.
outside of the city. The events that led to Laura Nelson’s lynching took place on the night of May 2, 1911, when, according to reports published in the local newspapers, Okfuskee County Deputy Sheriff George Loney and three men searched the home of Laura Nelson and her husband due to an accusation of their having stolen a cow and butchering it. After their home was searched and the meat was discovered, Laura Nelson’s husband, A. Nelson, admitted to having taken it in an effort to feed his family. While in the Nelson’s home, Sheriff Deputy Loney came across a loaded musket placed on the wall of the cabin and demanded that it be brought to him to be unload. Officers then stated that Laura Nelson reached for another weapon and a struggle for the gun ensued, involving her young teenage son, L.W. Nelson. During the struggle, the gun discharged, hitting Sheriff Deputy Loney in the leg and killing him.

A. Nelson admitted his involvement in the theft, stating that he killed the steer because “he had nothing for his children to eat.” He also confessed that it was he, not Laura Nelson who initially told the officers not to take the gun, and that Laura only reached for it in an attempt to retrieve the weapon from her son. Ironically, it was because of this confession that A. Nelson was able to escape the lynch mob due to the hasty actions of law enforcement to transfer A. Nelson to the penitentiary. Because Laura Nelson was adamant that both she and her son were innocent in the shooting death of Deputy Sheriff Loney, both Laura and L.W. were held in the Okfuskee County jail following their arrest to await their trial.

87 “A Deputy Sheriff Killed,” Independent, May 4, 1911.
88 Ibid.
89 Ibid.
On May 24, 1911 Laura Nelson and her fourteen year old son, L.W. Nelson, were taken from their cells in the Okemah, Oklahoma city jail by forty men, and transported by wagon six miles outside of the city to a Negro settlement. Once there, Nelson and her son were gagged using tow sacks, and hanged from the Canadian River Bridge with a noose formed of hemp. Laura Nelson was raped prior to her lynching and was hanged fully clothed, while her son was lynched approximately twenty feet away with his clothes “partly torn off.” Their bodies were discovered the following day by a boy taking his cow to the river.

The lynching of Laura and L.W. Nelson might have been intended to occur in secret, however the actions of the mob go to prove otherwise. It is documented that the men who accosted Nelson and her son, did so with the electrical lights of the jail burning, and with residents of Okemah over hearing the galloping of their horses. When Laura Nelson was lynched in 1911, there were two photographs taken. Titled The Lynching of Laura Nelson (Fig. 2) and The Lynching of Laura Nelson and Son (Fig. 4), these images were soon distributed as lynch postcards. Despite the Postal Service’s ban of “violent mail” in 1908, sales of lynch photographs remained a profitable business venture, leading some photographers to make a living from selling lynch photographs door to door. Lynching photographs and postcards gave the public the ability to witness lynchings without having to be in attendance. They became a vehicle that spread a message of white supremacy, bigotry, and hatred throughout the nation.

91 Allen and Als, Without Sanctuary, 179.
93 A tow sack or a gunny sack is a burlap bag that was often used on the farm to harvest or haul crops. “Tow Sack,” Miriam-Webster Dictionary, accessed June 14, 2015, http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/tow%20sack.
94 Ibid.
95 Ibid.
96 Ibid.
98 Moehringer, “An Obsessive Quest to Make People See.”
This message of racial hatred was not only conveyed in the photograph but also in the handwritten messages that accompanied them, which could make reference to the torture depicted on their front. An example of this can be found on a postcard depicting seventeen year old Jesse Washington, who was killed on May 16, 1916 in Waco, Texas.\(^9\) Washington was not hung by a noose but instead his body was beaten and castrated, and then burned to death by having his body repeatedly lowered into a fire.\(^{10}\) While the front of this postcard contains a photograph of Jesse Washington’s burned, mangled corpse, the back of the postcard contains a message from Joe Meyers to his parents, reading: “This is the Barbeque we had last night. My picture is to the left with a cross over it. Your son, Joe” (Fig. 14).\(^{101}\)

Most often, the professional photographers who developed lynching postcards were only present at the larger mass spectacle lynchings.\(^{102}\) Enticed by the large crowds and the opportunity to make a quick profit, these photographers would often arrange to be set up in the locations with the best vantage point of the lynching.\(^{103}\) In the vast majority of lynchings the photographs of the victims were not taken by professional photographers, however, but rather were taken by bystanders and amateur photographers who captured these spectacles using their Kodak cameras.\(^{104}\) The use of photography re-enforced the idea that they were taken objectively, although the reality is that the photographer was just as integral to the ritual of lynching as any other spectator.\(^{105}\) In many cases the action of the lynching was actually paused so that the photographer was able to get the desired shot, which prolonged the lynching.\(^{106}\)

\(^{9}\) Allen and Als, *Without Sanctuary*, 83.
\(^{10}\) Ibid. 174
\(^{102}\) Wood, *Lynching and Spectacle*, 77.
\(^{103}\) Ibid.
\(^{104}\) Ibid.
\(^{105}\) Ibid.85-86.
\(^{106}\) Ibid.
Within the black community, lynching images and photographs were a means of affirming solidarity in the name of anti-lynching advocacy. Ida B. Wells-Barnett was the first to include photographs of lynching in her anti-lynching campaign, where they appeared in her 1893 essay “Lynch Law” and her 1895 pamphlet *A Red Record*. Similarly, black owned and operated newspapers like the *Chicago Defender* and the *Indianapolis Freeman*, often published these images in the form of illustrations in an effort to convey the viciousness of lynchings to readers throughout the country. By documenting these atrocities, these illustrations not only “evoked emotion that fueled activism,” but they also advocated for “a strong response from the federal government.” Images such as the one appearing in the September 1889 issue of the *Freeman* titled, “Some Daily or Rather Nightly Occurrences in the South” (Fig. 15) painted a very clear picture of the pervasive threat of violence that blacks throughout the country faced during this period.

The illustrations of lynchings published in the *Chicago Defender* and the *Indianapolis Freeman* called attention to the plight of black Americans by openly criticizing the government’s blatant efforts to turn a blind eye to the stemming violence that was occurring throughout the country. Unlike the lynch postcards and photographs that were often distributed as tokens by the white spectators witnessing and taking part in these heinous gatherings; the sketches found in black newspapers provided poignant commentary on the horrors of lynching from the perspective of the black community. These images were not created or published to celebrate the culture of lynching but to vehemently advocate against it. Whether featured as stand-alone

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109 Ibid.
illustrations or accompanied by articles and editorials, their inclusion in African American periodicals provided a poignant statement on the stemming racial violence taking place in the United States.

Likewise, LaShawnda Crowe Storm’s literal reframing of the lynching postcard of Laura Nelson within an ornate band of appliquéd red velvet fabric serves as a visual re-contextualization of this image’s history with the intention of advocacy against lynching and racial violence in the United States. The integration of photography within quilting is a synthesis of two media that are created in seemingly opposing fashions. In the early twentieth century, the process of creating a photograph from film was largely chemical, involving a delicate balance between film’s exposure to darkness and light. The act of quilting is traditionally less reliant on the interaction of chemicals and more dependent on the artist’s hand. The digital image of Nelson in *Quilt I: Her Name Was Laura Nelson* shares the unique quality of having been developed using twentieth and twenty-first century photographic technology and nineteenth century quilting techniques. LaShawnda Crowe Storm uses digital imaging software to enlarge the photograph so as to render Nelson’s figure at human scale, or approximately 5 foot 8 inches. The image was then divided into squares, each being 5x5 inches, and printed onto fabric transfer paper. Finally, a chemical compound was used to affix the printed image onto cotton fabric, which was then hand-sewn together to form the quilted image of Laura Nelson (Fig. 16).

Crowe Storm’s enlargement of this photograph accentuates certain physical features of Laura Nelson, creating tension between an ostensible subject (Laura Nelson) and object (the detail of her wedding ring). Mieke Ball has discussed this type of tension in what she refers to as “point of view,” in which the subject of the image is “overruled by an odd detail that overtakes
The small feature of Nelson’s ring is not intended to be the focal point of this quilt, however its inclusion dramatically impacts the interpretation of this work (Fig. 17). Even without knowing the circumstances behind Laura Nelson’s lynching, the image of the ring provides the viewer with some insight into her life. The wedding ring serves as an indication of Nelson’s legitimacy and social acceptance within her community. The viewer at once recognizes that Nelson’s identity extends beyond that of a victim of racial violence, in that she was someone’s wife and possibly someone’s mother.

LaShawnda Crowe Storm is not alone in utilizing the power of appropriation to address issues of racism and sexism. Artist Carrie Mae Weems has also addresses these issues through the re-contextualization of Louis Agassiz’s slave daguerreotypes (Fig. 18) in her series From Here I Saw What Happened and I Cried (1995). Much like in lynching photography, Agassiz’s intention for the photographs was “to show the superiority of the white race” by dissecting the physical differences between the white European and the African slave. Each photograph depicts the male and female figures as being either fully or partially nude, with their bodies positioned in an effort to highlight their physical features. In Weems’ series, each of the 19th century images has been re-photographed, enlarged, and printed using a red filter (Fig 19). The images are accompanied by a single line of white text, sand-blasted onto the glass of

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110 Allie Terry-Fritsch, “Proof in the Pierced Flesh: Caravaggio’s Doubting Thomas and the Beholder of Wounds in Early Modern Italy,” Beholding Violence in Medieval and Early Europe, ed. by Allie Terry-Fritsch and Erin Felicia Labbie (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2012), 16. As Terry-Fritsch has examined, an example of this can be found in Caravaggio’s Doubting Thomas where his depiction of the apostle Thomas placing his finger in Christ’s side, is the focal point, overwhelming all other figures in the painting.


113 Carrie Mae Weems. From Here I Saw What Happened and I Cried.”
each photograph’s frame. The text includes such phrases as: “You Became a Scientific Profile,” “A Negroid Type,” and “An Anthropological Debate.”\textsuperscript{114}

The overlaying of text and photograph is an engagement in what W.E.B. DuBois referred to as “double consciousness,” or “the sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of the world that looks on in amused contempt and pity.”\textsuperscript{115} In appropriating these powerful and historic images LaShawnda Crowe Storm and Carrie Weems provide their audience the opportunity to experience double consciousness. The appropriated photographs of Laura Nelson and of Agassiz’s slave daguerreotypes allows for self projection by the viewer, in which the viewer is able to both subjectively and objectively engage with the artwork. In their re-contextualization of these photographs, Crowe Storm and Weems reclaim these images, while also providing viewers with a new gaze for seeing and interpreting this history.

African American artist Bettye Saar has also addressed the phenomenon of lynching in her 1972 piece, \textit{I’ve Got Rhythm} (Fig. 20).\textsuperscript{116} The piece itself consists of a repurposed metronome that contains a black skeleton as the metronome’s arm. Beneath the skeleton is the American flag and behind it is an image of an all white crowd in the 1960s. References to song and dance are found throughout this piece from the figure of the skeleton, which appears to “dance for his life” as the metronome’s arm ticks back and forth, to the image of a black minstrel dancing and playing the tambourine on the metronome’s interior. On the interior of the piece,

\textsuperscript{114} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{116} James Christian Steward et al., \textit{Betye Saar: Extending the Frozen Moment} (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 2006), 92.
Saar integrates the headlines of various newspapers which address lynch crimes, including one circled in red that reads, “Lynched After Refusing to Dance on White’s Command.” 117

Unlike the works of LaShawnda Crowe Storm, Saar’s *I’ve Got Rhythm* is small, only standing approximately nine inches high. 118 Its miniature stature provides viewers with a more intimate view of the object, placing them in the role of voyeur, rather than spectator. The object’s smaller size provides the viewer with a greater sense of control over the art piece, since the metronome is something that can be physically grasped and manipulated. Similar to Crowe Storm’s *Quilt I: Her Name Was Laura Nelson*, Saar’s work also has a very tactile quality. The metronome’s ability to open and close provides the viewer with an opportunity to manipulate the piece and interfere with its operation. Furthermore, the swinging of the metronome’s arm acts as a barrier, distancing the gaze of the lynch mob, from that of the art work’s viewers. In *Her Name Was Laura Nelson*, LaShawnda Crowe Storm forgoes the addition of any materials that would create a barrier between the viewer and the image of Laura Nelson; thereby making it difficult for viewers to remain disengaged with the image before them.

If, as Marianne Hirsch suggests, the power of postmemory does lie in its ability to connect to its object through “projection, investment and creation,” then the power of LaShawnda Crowe Storm’s *Quilt I: Her Name Was Laura Nelson* lies in its ability to connect communally to its audience. 119 While both Carrie Mae Weems’ series *From Here I Saw What Happened and I Cried* and Bettye Saar’s *I’ve Got Rhythm* address America’s history of racial violence, only the work of Crowe Storm works through this history communally by means of

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117 Ibid.
118 Ibid.
creation, observation, and discussion. The Lynch Quilts Project’s utilization of social media\textsuperscript{120} and the internet by means of its website \url{www.thelynchquiltsproject.com} has made it even more accessible to the public. The website is prominently featured on the posters and brochures that accompany the quilt whenever it is exhibited. Furthermore, the site contains a wealth of information on the project, its quilts, and the many ways that one can become involved.\textsuperscript{121}

In \textit{Quilt I}, it is the contributions of the early members of The Lynch Quilts Project that allow this work to become an exercise in what postmemory’s ability to be “a structure of inter- and trans-generational transmission of knowledge and experience.”\textsuperscript{122} This transmission of knowledge can occur while engaging in discussion with fellow quilters at one of the project’s community sewing days or while accessing the quilting resources listed on the website. The act of creating communally is the lifeblood of The Lynch Quilt’s Project, for it is through the act of “circling to sew” that the artmaking is sustained. LaShawnda Crowe Storm writes that by “circling to sew” the act of quilting becomes “a balancing force in the face of the legacy of lynching, leading the way towards a more tolerant and healed community.”\textsuperscript{123} Through the Lynch Quilt’s Project’s website and social media presence, the public is able to join in this communal sewing circle by forging connections across boundaries of politics, gender, socio-economic status, religion, race, and age.

\textsuperscript{120} The Lynch Quilts Project has a Facebook page and its web address is \url{https://www.facebook.com/thelynchquiltsproject?fref=ts}. There is also a YouTube video of LaShawnda Crowe Storm’s TEDx Indianapolis presentation “Building Community One Stitch at a Time.” The video was published on November 17, 2013, and its link is \url{https://youtu.be/-Ch9M2JX6Og}.

\textsuperscript{121} “Get Involved,” The Lynch Quilts Project, accessed June 15, 2015, \url{http://www.thelynchquiltsproject.com/#!giving/c70d}.


CHAPTER III:
A PUBLIC REMEMBRANCE OF A DIFFICULT HISTORY: MEMORIAL AND POSTMEMORY IN HER NAME WAS LAURA NELSON

On October 11, 1987, the AIDS Memorial quilt was unveiled for the first time on the National Mall in Washington D.C. (Fig. 21). Comprised of 1,920 panels and spanning the length of a football field, the quilt was viewed by over a half million visitors in the opening weekend. The idea to create a memorial dedicated to those who had lost their lives to the AIDS virus was conceived in 1985 by Cleve Jones, a San Francisco community activist, after seeing the headline in the San Francisco Chronicle, “1,000 San Franciscans Dead of AIDS.” The article’s headline resonated deeply within him, as he had lost family and friends to the disease. Later that day, Cleve Jones was in the midst of orchestrating a memorial march for gay activist Harvey Milk when he asked each of the participants to write the name of a friend or loved one who had died of AIDS on a placard. When the wall of names was taped to the exterior of the old San Francisco Federal Building, Jones was struck as to how it resembled a patchwork quilt and the idea for the AIDS Memorial Quilt (also referred to as the NAMES Project Quilt) was born.

The shared association of quilting and memorial is one that is inherent to both the AIDS Memorial Quilt and Quilt I: Her Name Was Laura Nelson. Often the interpretation of quilts as

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125 Ibid.
127 Ibid.
128 Ibid.
129 Ibid.
memorials is largely influenced by the materials that are used to construct them. It is quite common for patchwork quilts to be sewn using various types of clothing and other textiles that once belonged to the quilter’s family and friends. The integration of these items into the blocks of the quilt transforms these textiles into memorials that can pay homage one’s life and family heritage. In both the AIDS Memorial Quilt and *Her Name Was Laura Nelson* the incorporation of personal items once belonging to the quilter or the memorialized added to their messages of remembrance and activism. The inclusion of various items like wedding rings, photographs, flags, stuffed animals, and even cremated ashes into the panels of the AIDS Memorial Quilt, has enabled the quilt to become a sacred space of remembrance.\(^{130}\)

The integration of donor’s baby bibs, spiritual paraphernalia, and even sections of wedding dresses into the white quilt squares of *Her Name Was Laura Nelson* enables the personal memories of the many members of The Lynch Quilt Project to become part of collective memory. Collective memories are not solely shared memories from a collection of individuals but rather they are, as defined by Jeffrey Olick, “publically available symbols maintained by society.”\(^{131}\) The collective involvement of The Lynch Quilts Project’s members is an exploration of the parameters of the history of black women and lynching. Furthermore, the inclusion of their personal items adds an additional narrative to *Her Name Was Laura Nelson* while also becoming an act of solidarity, signifying their support for the project and its campaign for social justice.

Often the exhibition of LaShawnda Crowe Storm’s *Quilt I: Her Name Was Laura Nelson* occurs in environments where the majority of its viewers are members of postmemory’s second

\(^{130}\)Ibid.

generation, individuals who would not have lived during the United States’ “lynching era.” These sites include the college campuses of Bowling Green State University and Butler University, and in public sites like the Indianapolis Central Library. The representation of memorial is heightened when the quilt is exhibited hanging in front of its corresponding memorial wallpaper, which lists the names, dates, and locations of lynchings in the United States. The addition of this detail can have a profound impact on a viewer’s interpretation of the work (Fig. 22). Through the visual consumption of the continuous list of names, the viewer not only becomes aware of Laura Nelson’s lynching, but also of the thousands of others who were victims of this violence. Moreover, whenever Quilt I is exhibited publically, it is done so with accompanying brochures and signage explaining The Lynch Quilts Project and ways in which the public can become involved. Visitors are often encouraged to leave fabric for the project at these sites, and to date over 150 pounds of fabric have been contributed to the project.132

Quilt I is not the only work of LaShawnda Crowe Storm’s that memorializes victims of racial violence. In her ongoing work Quilt VI: Memoria: In Progress, Crowe Storm invites the community to become a part of the memorial process by providing them with an opportunity to write names of anyone who was killed as a result of racial violence (Fig. 9). In place of stitched panels of fabric, the panels of Memoria: In Progress are composed of pressed boards that are often mounted on the walls of the gallery space. The panels, which are either black or white, contain names and information on various occurrences of racial violence. Each time the quilt is exhibited, visitors are encouraged to write the name of someone whose life was lost to racial violence on one of Quilt VI’s black or white boards.133 The boards will eventually be digitally photographed and made into fabric quilt squares that will then be used to create a series of

132 “The Project: An Overview.”
The practice of female artists creating public memorials to lynch victims is not unprecedented. In 1919, sculptor Meta Warrick Fuller paid homage to the tragedy of Mary Turner within her sculpture, *Mary Turner: As A Silent Protest Against Mob Violence* (Fig. 23). In Fuller’s piece the figure of Mary Turner is rendered in plaster and is sculpted so that she is looking down into her cradled arms as flames appear to engulf her body. The statue is affixed upon a small pedestal, where the text “In Memory of Mary Turner” is inscribed. In this piece Meta Warrick Fuller creates both a memorial to Turner and a work of protest. This work does not show Mary Turner in a state of victimhood, but rather it renders her victorious over her oppressors. In the sculpture Turner is not depicted in death but instead appears to overcome the last moments of her life, transcending the flames and outstretched hands of the lynch mob.

In February 2002, artist Carla Stetson and writer Anthony Porter strove to create a space that would “stimulate reflection and discussion,” in their development of the *Clayton, Jackson, McGhie Memorial* in Duluth, Minnesota (Fig. 24). The memorial was dedicated in 2003 to Elias Clayton, Elmer Jackson, and Isaac McGhie, the three victims of the 1920 triple lynching that took place in downtown Duluth. Falsely accused of raping a white woman, the young men were hanged from a light pole on June 15, 1920 before a crowd of nearly 10,000. Named in their honor, the idea for the memorial was formed after members of the community began to notice an absence in recognition of this history. Not even the textbooks used by Duluth’s own

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134 LaShawnda Crowe Storm, phone interview by Viola Ratcliffe, June 18, 2015.
136 Ibid.
137 Ibid.
138 Ibid.
139 “Creation of the Memorial.”
141 Ibid.
142 “Creation of the Memorial.”
school district contained any mention of the lynching that took place in their city.\textsuperscript{143} The memorial depicts the three young men standing side by side, fully cast in bronze and partially embedded in the memorial’s interior walls. Throughout the design process Stetson made it a priority to connect the memorial to the existing local community, even using three young men from the Duluth area as the models. The \textit{Clayton, Jackson, McGhie Memorial} maintains its presence in the community through its many associated educational projects, including the establishment of a college scholarship for high school seniors living in the Duluth, Minnesota area.\textsuperscript{144}

The work of Meta Warrick Fuller’s \textit{Mary Turner: As A Silent Protest Against Mob Violence}, Carla Stetson and Anthony Porter’s \textit{Clayton, Jackson, McGhie Memorial}, and LaShawnda Crowe Storm’s \textit{Quilt I: Her Name Was Laura Nelson} each address the realm of postmemory within a public space. The \textit{Clayton, Jackson, McGhie Memorial} was made with the intent to create a “public space that could promote reconciliation and build bridges,” and in the process, provides a space for the public to engage with postmemory.\textsuperscript{145} What distinguishes \textit{Her Name Was Laura Nelson} from the \textit{Clayton, Jackson, McGhie Memorial} and from \textit{Mary Turner: As a Silent Protest Against Mob Violence} is its familiarity as a material object. The proliferation of quilts as family heirlooms and historical artifacts has made them accessible in a way that most public monuments are not. When writing about “prospective memory” or the ways in which past and present “would be remembered in the future,” the early 19\textsuperscript{th} century American antiquarian John Fanning Watson “believed that material objects would forestall cultural amnesia.”\textsuperscript{146} By

\textsuperscript{143} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{145} Ibid.

taking the form of a quilt, the appropriated image *The Lynching of Laura Nelson* is effective at addressing the historical amnesia regarding the lynching of black women, specifically because quilting allows for an acknowledgement of the United States’ history of racial injustice in a way that lynch photographs cannot. Lynch photographs serve as a somber reminder of the violence that has been directed at African Americans since their arrival in the United States, however they do not act as a memorial to the victims of this violence. By incorporating the lynch photograph of Laura Nelson into *Quilt I*, LaShawnda Crowe Storm doesn’t simply remind the viewer of this history, she creates a space for the viewer to pay homage to its victims.

For Master quilter Otis Grove, one of the founding members of The Lynch Quilts Project, working on *Her Name Was Laura Nelson* provided him an opportunity to discuss his own experiences with racism (Fig. 25). Grove grew up in Mobile, Alabama during the era of Jim Crowe and witnessed first-hand racial bigotry and staunch segregation. In a 2011 interview with the *Indianapolis Reporter* Otis Grove stated: “Living in Mobile (Ala.), I saw things that happened. The Ku Klux Klan used to march in Mobile. It was one of those things that we were constantly aware of and it was always a fear, especially for young Black males being out at night.”

While participating in one of The Lynch Quilts Project’s community sewing days in June 2014, I came to understand how the act of communal quilting could allow for insightful discussion on various topics. While piecing together quilt squares for *Quilt IV*, I and the other quilters openly discussed our families, our quilts, and our communities. One topic that we did not discuss however was The Lynch Quilts Project itself, being that many of the women there were not associated with The Lynch Quilts Project. Because these women were not quilting as part of

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the project, LaShawnda Crowe Storm informed me that they might be uncomfortable talking about lynching, and that I should not ask them about it.

The presumed reaction from these quilters is not without basis. When textile artist Marilyn Michele Kunkel, brought the project to her hometown of Vernonia, Oregon, it was initially met with resentment. Kunkel, who is white, spoke about her experience:

"I started to speak about the project at a quilt fair and they had a very physical reaction. One woman said ‘we don't need to talk about that. That's behind us.' Another said ‘I know that Jimmy's grandpa still (makes racial comments).’ They continued talking and in 20 minutes agreed that the town could use a project like this. I still had people jumping down my throat asking who I was and why would I bring a project like this in the community."

Kunkel went on to state that although “many people were repulsed by the project; it was a great vehicle for discussion.”

Similar mixed sentiments were expressed when the Quilt I: Her Name Was Laura Nelson was shown at the Indianapolis Central Library (Fig. 26). While some patrons expressed appreciation and praised Crowe Storm for addressing this history, others, such as library patron Randolf Johnson, did not mince words. Johnson, a middle aged black man, stated that he found the image to be “very offensive,” particularly with it being displayed so close to Black History Month.

Randolf Johnson is not alone in taking offense to contemporary exhibition of lynching images and photographs. In 2000, the lynch postcards of Laura Nelson and L.W. Nelson and

148Ibid.
149Ibid.
150Ibid.
many others re-entered mainstream public consciousness when they were included in the exhibition *Witness: Photographs of Lynching from the Collection of James Allen* and the subsequent book *Without Sanctuary: Lynching Photography in America*.\(^{152}\) The exhibition of the tortured bodies of black men and women in an art gallery ignited debate regarding the appropriate use of these photographs. Black scholar Michael Eric Dyson was quite outspoken in his opinion of the *Witness* exhibition and book *Witness* stating, “To commercialize the suffering of black people is to do the ultimate disservice to black people.”\(^{153}\) The negative reactions to this artwork are indicative of the residual trauma that exists regarding the history of racial violence in the United States. The intersession of time and trauma is necessary to consider, particularly because trauma is often “experienced belatedly and it is only after a safe period of time has passed that one can begin to bring the memory of a traumatic occurrence into their consciousness.”\(^{154}\) Art’s ability to serve as a response to trauma is evidenced in the work of Esther Nisenthal Krinitz.\(^{155}\) Also a fiber artist, Krinitz is a Polish Holocaust survivor, who, at the age of 50, created a series of intricately stitched fabric illustrations depicting the journey that she and her sister underwent in order to escape Nazi imprisonment.\(^{156}\) Comprised of thirty-six fabric pictures, Krinitz’s *Fabric of Survival* provides the viewer with an intimate look into her childhood experience of living and escaping the Nazi occupation. Works like *The Nazi’s Beat Up My Father* (1993) and *We Fled Across the Fields* (1992), are now a record of memories that otherwise may have been lost over time (Fig. 27-28). Accompanying each embroidered image is


\(^{155}\) Farrington, *Art on Fire*, 1.

\(^{156}\) Ibid.
an embroidered narrative explaining the scene that is being depicted. When read in succession, these narratives provide a powerful postmemory resource to a younger generation of viewers.

The relationship between postmemory and trauma is also present in the painted story quilts of African American artist Faith Ringgold. Ringgold is an artist, writer, and activist whose groundbreaking story quilts, constructed on painted canvas with a pieced fabric border, “helped raise the tradition of quiltmaking from the realm of craft to that of fine art.” In her series, *The American Collection; #1*, Ringgold’s quilted painting *We Came to America* (1997), contains the echoes of postmemory in its portrayal of a burning slave ship off shore from the New York Harbor (Fig. 29). In the harbor waters, the now freed slaves are jubilantly bobbing in the current and one figure is even shown to be walking on water. The statue of liberty, now depicted as a black woman, is shown holding a baby in one arm and the torch in another. Unlike the embroidered images of Esther Krinitz, Faith Ringgold’s *We Came to America* is not a depiction of something that she experienced during her life. Nevertheless, it is likely that Faith Ringgold’s own postmemory of slavery, which would have been influenced by her personal knowledge of this history, would have inspired the creation of this dream image.

Much like LaShawnda Crowe Storm’s *Her Name Was Laura Nelson* and Krinitz’s *Fabric of Survival*, Faith Ringgold’s *We Came to America* can provide powerful influence on one’s postmemory regarding slavery. Ringgold’s reinterpretation of this history, allows for a more didactic exploration of it, and allows viewers the opportunity to consider facets of this history that may have gone unlearned. The urgency to preserve and collect the histories of Holocaust survivors and first generation witnesses of lynchings is significant, being that the numbers of remaining survivors steadily decreases with each passing year. Although there are no longer any

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157 Ibid.
living survivors of slavery, their testimonies are accessible in the form of slave narratives, WPA interviews, and historic artifacts and documentation. Furthermore, this history continues to be preserved the work of artists like LaShawnda Crowe Storm, Esther Nisenthal Krinitz, and Faith Ringgold, whose art ensures that this knowledge will not elude future generations.

Currently, efforts are being undertaken to give wider recognition to our nation’s history of lynching through the erection of public monuments and historic markers in areas where lynchings occurred. The movement is being orchestrated by Bryan Stevenson, founder and head of the Equal Justice Initiative located in Montgomery, Alabama, who hopes that creating these memorials will raise awareness about the frequency and the proliferation of lynchings in the United States.\textsuperscript{159} While engaged in the research of lynching statistics occurring from 1877-1950, Stevenson discovered 700 additional lynch victims that had previously gone undocumented.\textsuperscript{160} According to University of Georgia Professor E.M. Beck, most people are unaware of their community’s history of lynching and racial violence. He states: “What people don’t realize here is just how many there were, and how close. Places they drive by every day.”

The ability of memorials to transform public space is a characteristic found in many Holocaust memorials throughout Europe. A particularly poignant example is the\textsuperscript{161} \textit{Shoes on the Danube} in Budapest, Hungary. The memorial was installed in 2005 in dedicated to the Hungarian Jewish men, women and children who were shot into the Danube River in the winter


\textsuperscript{160}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{161}During the summer of 2014 I along with 12 K-12 North West Ohio educators travelled to Poland, Hungary and Greece to conduct research on four Toledo area Holocaust survivors. The program \textit{Walking Witness: Civic Responsibility in the Shadow of the Holocaust} was a Fulbright-Hays group study abroad and was developed by BGSU instructors Heather Elliot-Famularo and Dr. Timothy Murnen.
of 1944-1945 by members of the Arrow Cross Party (Fig. 30)\textsuperscript{162} The inclusion of the many pairs of bronze shoes, all of various styles and sizes, is a somber reminder of the tragedy that occurred here, a tragedy that otherwise would go unacknowledged and perhaps unknown by the many visitors to this area. In encountering \textit{Shoes on the Danube} the viewer is called to let this history live on through them and to “Never Forget”\textsuperscript{163} this history or its victims. Often visitors to the Holocaust memorial in Danube leave flowers, notes, and candles amongst the shoes in an attempt to honor and remember the victims of this tragedy.

LaShawnda Crowe Storm’s memorial to lynch victims in \textit{Her Name Was Laura Nelson} ensures that the history of black women and lynching in the United States no longer goes unacknowledged. In each site where the quilt is displayed the environment of the space is transformed into a space of memorial and reverence, honoring the life of Laura Nelson and all other victims of lynching in the United States. By naming the first quilt of the project \textit{Her Name Was Laura Nelson}, Crowe Storm calls attention to the many victims of lynching whose names have gone unknown, and whose graves go unmarked.


\textsuperscript{163} Never Forget is a phrase that has become synonymous with Holocaust memorials and advocacy, however it can also be applied to the history of lynching in the United States. The quotes are for emphasis.
CONCLUSION

In October 2002, Leonard Gakinya, a twenty-seven year old man of African descent was found hanged from a radio tower in Springfield, Missouri. The radio tower was located near the site of the triple lynching of that took place in Springfield in 1906. Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, nooses have been found hanging at jobsites in Houston, Texas; Athens, Alabama; and Detroit, Michigan. Then in August 2006, three nooses were hung from a tree on the campus of Jena High School in Jena, Louisiana. The nooses were placed there after a black student asked if he could sit under the tree, which was considered to be reserved for whites. In December of that same year, six black male students of Jena High School, referred to as the Jena 6, brutally beat a white male student and, as a result, five of the six were charged with attempted murder. The charges sparked outrage amongst many in the wider community, including leaders like Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton, who believed that these boys were so harshly charged because of their race. In September 2007, over ten thousand protesters from around the country, including myself, rallied in Jena, Louisiana taking part in one of the largest civil rights rallies of the decade.

164 Apel, Imagery of Lynching, 16.
These incidents are proof that the memories of, and ramifications concerning lynchings are still present within our society. In 2011 legislation was introduced to Congress by Rep. Shelia Jackson Lee of Texas to make it a federal crime to display a noose in public with the intent to harass or intimidate.\footnote{\textit{“H.R.221 – Noose Hate Crime Act of 2011,” Congress.Gov, accessed March 4, 2015, \url{https://www.congress.gov/bill/112th-congress/house-bill/221}.} \footnote{Ibid.}} As of now, that bill still has not passed the House.\footnote{Ibid.} Then in March 2015 a video surfaced on the internet featuring the University of Oklahoma’s Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity brazenly engaging in a disturbingly racist chant, where the brothers state that they would rather lynch a black man than allow him to join their organization.\footnote{The actions of the University of Oklahoma Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity members resulted in the national chapter shutting down the fraternity house and the president of the University of Oklahoma, Dr. David Boren publically stating that the fraternity is no longer affiliated with the school. “Disgraceful’ University of Oklahoma Fraternity Shuttered After Racist Chant,” Elliot C. McLaughlin, CNN, March 10, 2015, accessed June 16, 2015, \url{http://www.cnn.com/2015/03/09/us/oklahoma-fraternity- chant/}.} That same month, in Port Gibson, Mississippi, a 54 year old black man by the name of Otis Byrd was found hanged from a tree limb, with bedsheets tied around his neck.\footnote{“Feds: No Evidence that Black Miss. Man Hanging was Homicide,” CBS News, May 29, 2015, accessed June 17, 2015, \url{http://www.cbsnews.com/news/feds-no-evidence-that-black-mississippi-man-otis-byrds-hanging-was-homicide/}.} The case garnered a rash of media attention as well as the involvement of the FBI. Although the tree limb was 15 feet in the air, the Justice Department ultimately concluded that there was no evidence to indicate that Byrd’s death was a homicide. Lawyers hired by Byrd’s family, however, are currently conducting a separate investigation.\footnote{Ibid.}

The shooting deaths of Trayvon Martin (2012), Mike Brown (2014), and Tamir Rice (2014), the choking death of Eric Garner (2014), and the death of Freddie Gray (2015) have reignited a discussion on black men and boys being targeted and killed as a result of their being black. The tragic shooting of nine black men and women on June 17, 2015 at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina is a devastating reminder of the
horrific acts of racial violence that continues to occur to black men, women, and children in the United States. These tragedies have led to a series of nationwide protests resulting in both younger and older Americans speaking out and taking a stand against the violence and brutality perpetrated towards African Americans. These protests have also ushered in a new era of civil rights and social justice movements in the United States which are mobilizing through the use of hashtags like #BlackLivesMatter, #ICan’tBreathe, #Ferguson and many others. The pairing of photographs, videos, memes, illustrations and tweets along with these hashtags on social media websites like Twitter, Tumblr, Instagram, and Facebook have helped to create an international conversation about race, privilege, and violence.

Throughout these protests there has been an effort to acknowledge the experience of black women in regard to racial violence in America, as indicated by hashtags like #BlackWomenMatter, #BlackGirlsMatter, and #BlackLesbiansMatter. Yet when analyzing instances of racial violence that only involve black female victims, there appears to be less of a public outcry. There is far less reported about occurrences of police brutality amongst black women and girls, despite there being multiple cases of black females being victims of police shootings. These shootings have resulted in the deaths of Rekia Boyd (Chicago 2012), Yvette

178 Rekia Boyd was shot to death at the age of 22 when off duty police officer Dante Servin fired five shots into a group of people in a Chicago Alley following a shouting match. Servin believed that one of the men in the crowd was reaching to pull out a gun when in fact the man was reaching for his cell phone. Dante Servin was prosecuted for involuntary manslaughter and was found to be not guilty. “Rekia Boyd Shooting was ‘Beyond Reckless’ So Cop Got a Pass, Chicago Tribune, April 22, 2015, accessed June 17, 2015, http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/opinion/editorials/ct-cop-verdict-servin-edit-0423-20150422-story.html.
Smith (Texas 2014), Kendra James (Portland 2003), and Aiyana Stanley-Jones (Detroit 2010), who was killed at the age of seven. One could argue one of the reasons there is less public protest concerning police violence towards black women, is because of a lack of video evidence. The use of video and photography by the news media and protest organizers as a way to establish a persona of the victim amongst the general public has proven to be quite influential to the public’s perception of the victim. The #IfTheyGunnedMeDown hashtag began in response to the media’s use of contradicting photographs of Ferguson shooting victim Mike Brown. These photographs were purposely selected to portray Mike Brown in either a negative or positive light, in an attempt to influence the public’s sympathies regarding the circumstances around Brown’s shooting. To protest this media practice, people began to post dual photos of themselves from social media. In one image the user would be depicted as an upstanding member of their community, in another a possible troublemaker.

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179 Yvette Smith was shot and killed by Bastrop County Texas Sheriff’s deputy Daniel Willis in February 2014 after police had been called to her home regarding two men fighting over money. When they officers arrived, they asked Yvette Smith to come out of the home and when she did Willis shot her twice, killing her. In June 2014 Daniel Willis was indicted for murder by a grand jury. “Family of Woman Shot, Killed by Bastrop County Sheriff’s Deputy Seeks Damages,” Calily Bien, KXAN, August 22, 2014, accessed June 17, 2015, http://kxan.com/2014/08/22/family-of-woman-shot-killed-by-bastrop-county-sheriffs-deputy-seeks-damages/.

180 In 2003 Kendra James was shot and killed during a traffic stop in Portland, Oregon. The officer was disciplined by the police chief at the time, but much of that was later overturned. “Kendra James Remembered at Portland Rally,” KION, May 5, 2013, accessed June 17, 2015, http://koin.com/2013/05/05/kendra-james-remembered-at-portland-rally/.

181 On May 16, 2010 Aiyana Stanley-Jones was shot and killed by officer Joseph Weekly as she slept on a sofa inside her home in the middle of the night. The officer forced his way into the home while conducting a SWAT style operation to search for Aiyana’s uncle who was suspected of killing a teenager a few days before. All charges against officer Weekly were eventually dismissed after juries failed twice to reach a verdict in the case. “She was Only a Baby: Last Charge Dropped in Police Raid that Killed Sleeping Detroit Child,” Rose Hackamn, The Guardian, January 31, 2015, accessed June 17, 2015, http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/jan/31/detroit-aiyana-stanley-jones-police-officer-cleared.


184 Ibid.

185 Ibid.
Videos capturing acts of racial violence directed towards black females have not surfaced as readily as video footage of black men. It was not until the cell phone footage surfaced of former police officer Cpl. Eric Casebolt, pushing to the ground a 15 year old African American girl at a June 2015 pool party in McKinney, Texas that an image of a black girl being assaulted by law enforcement became a mainstream media topic.\textsuperscript{186} To address the lack of media coverage regarding the shooting of black women by law enforcement, the advocacy group “Say Her Name” has launched public protests in sixteen cities across the United States including San Francisco, Chicago, and New Orleans.\textsuperscript{187}

The efforts of Say Her Name, #BlackWomenMatter, and #BlackGirlsMatter are bringing attention to the troubling history that black women have had with law enforcement and the criminal justice system in the United States. One must only remember that Laura Nelson was being held in police custody when she and her teenage son were taken from their cells and lynched. If it were not for the photographic evidence of Laura Nelson’s lynching it is quite possible that she would have become one of the many unknown victims of racial violence in the United States. Tragically, even with ample press coverage of Nelson’s lynching in Oklahoma and news publications throughout the country, officials were still unwilling to conduct an investigation to identify the members of the lynch mob and prosecute them.\textsuperscript{188}

How is it that a miscarriage of justice towards black men renders more attention from the media and the public than when it does when it is directed towards black women? Arguably the answer lies in our culture’s tendency to overlook and discount the plight of black women,

\textsuperscript{187}“Why These Bay Area Women Protested Topless,” Angela Tafoya, Refinery29, May 22, 2015, accessed June 17, 2015, \url{http://www.refinery29.com/2015/05/87961/topless-protesters-san-francisco}.
\textsuperscript{188a}“Along the Color Line,” \textit{The Crisis}, July 1911, 99.
particularly as it pertains to their experience with racism, sexism, and violence. Rachel Gilmer, Associate Director of the African American Policy Forum, addresses this very issue in stating:

“Across the board, all the way up from the White House’s My Brother’s Keeper initiative down to the grassroots movements that we’ve seen rise up in this country in response to state violence, men and boys are seen as the primary target of racial injustice. This has led to the idea that women and girls of color are not doing as bad, or that we’re not at risk at all.”

History recognizes the atrocity of almost 5,000 black individuals losing their lives to the lynch mob, but what it has failed to acknowledge is the impact that this pervasive brutality has had and continues to have on black women—on the countless mothers that have had to experience the loss of a son, on the many wives that have experienced the loss of their husbands, and on the daughter’s that have had to experience the loss of their fathers.

In *Quilt I: Her Name Was Laura Nelson*, LaShawnda Crowe Storm bridges the historical gap between the “lynching era” and the present era. It places the accountability of witnessing the murder of Laura Nelson, not just on those living in 1911 Okemah, Oklahoma, but on all those who come in contact with this quilt. For so long the personal accounts of women have been discounted as unimportant and unsubstantial. By making the lynch postcard of Laura Nelson the focal point of *Quilt I*, LaShawnda Crowe Strom forces the viewer to become cognizant of this history that for so long has been disregarded.

In Arlene Keizer’s article on African American postmemory, an important question is posed: “What will we do when all we have is postmemory and official history?” This question becomes even more pressing when considering that there are very few living witnesses of

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189 “Say Her Name’ Turns Spotlight on Black Women and Girls Killed by Police.”
190 Keizer, “Gone Astray in the Flesh,” 1649.
lynchings left to pass on their memories to the second generation, and fewer witnesses willing to
discuss their own experiences of lynching. When considering the possibility that invaluable first-
hand knowledge be lost with the passing of these generations, it becomes quite clear that there is
an urgent need to ensure that their testimony does not go unacknowledged. In *Quilt I: Her Name
Was Laura Nelson*, LaShawnda Crowe Storm enables her viewers to engage communally in the
history of black women and lynching, both in the act of art making and in the act of experiencing
the public exhibition of this art. Crowe Storm’s rendering of the life size image of Laura Nelson
places the viewer in the position to become a spectator and a witness to this lynching. It is within
this method of creation and exhibition that LaShawnda Crowe Storm allows for *Quilt I: Her
Name Was Laura Nelson* to be an exercise in postmemory and remembrance; ensuring that the
history of black women and lynching in America will not go forgotten.
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Figure 1: - LaShawnda Crowe Storm, *Quilt I: Her Name Was Laura Nelson*, from The Lynch Quilts Project. Quilt (Purchased and Community Donated Materials), glass beads, machine pieced, and hand quilted, 2004. 123.5 x 90.5 in. Courtesy of the artist © LaShanwda Crowe Storm.
Figure 2: *The Lynching of Laura Nelson*. Photograph.

May 25, 1911. Courtesy of ARTstor Slide Gallery.
Figure 3: LaShawnda Crowe Storm and *Quilt I: Her Name Was Laura Nelson*. Courtesy of Danese Kenon at the Indianapolis Star.
Figure 4:- *The Lynching of Laura Nelson and Son*. Gelatin silver print. Real photo postcard.

May 25, 1911. Courtesy of *Without Sanctuary: Lynching Photography in America*. 
Figure 5: LaShawnda Crowe Storm, *Quilt II: RedRum Summer 1919*, from The Lynch Quilts Project. Quilt (Community Donated Materials), 2014.Courtesy of the artist © LaShawnda Crowe Storm.
Figure 6: - LaShawnda Crowe Storm, *Quilt III: A Partial Listing*, from The Lynch Quilts Project. Quilt. Courtesy of the artist © LaShawnda Crowe Storm. This quilt is currently being completed.

Figure 7: - LaShawnda Crowe Storm, *Quilt IV* from The Lynch Quilts Project. Quilt.

  Courtesy of the artist © LaShawnda Crowe Storm. This quilt is currently being pieced and is almost completed. It will not be named until it is finished.
Figure 8: - LaShawnda Crowe Storm, *Quilt V: Pinky’s Legacy/ The Making Quilt* from The Lynch Quilts Project. Quilt. Courtesy of the artist © LaShawnda Crowe Storm. This quilt is currently being completed.
Figure 9: - LaShawnda Crowe Storm, *Quilt VI: Memoria in Progress* from The Lynch Quilts Project. Quilt. Courtesy of the artist © LaShawnda Crowe Storm. This quilt is an ongoing installation.
Figure 10: - Image detail of the quilt squares that were created from donated fabric in *Quilt I: Her Name Was Laura Nelson*. Some of the fabrics found in these squares were originally baby bibs, spiritual paraphernalia, and wedding dresses. Courtesy of Danese Kenon at the Indianapolis Star.
Figure 11: Hausa Horsemen. Niamy, Nigeria. 1971. Courtesy of ARTstor Slide Gallery.
Figure 12: - *Wall Hanging with an Allegory to the King Glèlè* by the Dahoumey Cultures, Fon people. Wall hanging with imported cotton and appliqué. 220 x 134 x 1 cm. Courtesy of Réunion des Musées Nationaux.
Figure 13: - Gees Bend Quilt. Lucy T. Pettway, *Snowball*. Cotton, corduroy, cotton sacking materials, Circa 1950. 85 x 85 in. Courtesy of Auburn University.
Figure 14: - *The Lynching of Jesse Washington.* Gelatin silver print. Real photo postcard.

May 16, 1916, 5 ½ x 3 ½ in. Courtesy of *Without Sanctuary: Lynching Photography in America.* Postcard reads: “This is the Barbeque we had last night. My picture is to the left with a cross over it your son Joe.”
Figure 15: - Some Daily or Nightly Occurrences in the South. Indianapolis Freeman. September 1889. Image courtesy of Amanda K. Frisken, “A Song Without Words: Anti-Lynching Imagery in the African American Press, 1889-1898.”
Figure 16: - Image detail LaShawnda Crowe Storm, *Quilt I: Her Name Was Laura Nelson*, from *The Lynch Quilts Project* series. Quilt (Purchased and Community Donated Materials), glass beads, machine pieced, and hand quilted, 2004. 123.5 x 90.5 in. Courtesy of the artist © LaShanwda Crowe Storm.
Figure 17: - Image detail of the quilt’s center panel. LaShawnda Crowe Storm, Quilt I: Her Name Was Laura Nelson, from The Lynch Quilts Project series. Quilt (Purchased and Community Donated Materials), glass beads, machine pieced, and hand quilted, 2004. 123.5 x 90.5 in. Courtesy of Frank Espich at the Indianapolis Star.
Figure 18: - J. T. Zealy, *Renty: African born slave, left and Delia: daughter of Renty* (South Carolina). Daguerreotype, 1850. Courtesy of ARTstor Slide Gallery.
Figure 19: - Carrie Mae Weems, *From Here I Saw What Happened and I Cried*. Chromogenic color prints with sand-blasted text on glass, 1995. 28 works, 26 ¾ x 22 in, 4 works 22 x 26 ¾ in, 2 works 43 ½ x 33 ½ in. Courtesy of MOMA.
Figure 21: - Paul Margolies, *AIDS Memorial Quilt on the National Mall*. Photograph, 1996.

Courtesy of Gregg Stull, “The AIDS Memorial Quilt: Performing Memory: Piecing Action.”
Figure 22: - LaShawnda Crowe Storm, *Quilt I: Her Name Was Laura Nelson* with Wall Detail.

Courtesy of the artist © LaShanwda Crowe Storm.
Figure 23: - Meta Warrick Fuller, *Mary Turner: As A Silent Protest Against Mob Violence.*

Figure 24: - *Clayton, Jackson, McGhie Memorial*, 2003, Duluth, Minnesota.

Memorial developed by artist Carla Stetson and writer Anthony Porter.
Figure 25: Volunteer and Master Quilter Otis Grove working on *Quilt I: Her Name Was Laura Nelson* at the Chicago Historical Society, 2003-2004. Courtesy of the artist.
Figure 26: *Quilt I: Her Name Was Laura Nelson* on view at the Indianapolis Central Library Sunday, January 27, 2013. Photographed by Danese Kenon. Courtesy of the *Indianapolis Star*. 
Figure 27: - Esther Krinitz, *11. The Nazi's Beat Up My Father* from the *Fabric of Survival* series. Embroidery and fabric collage, 1993. 38 x 43 in. Courtesy of Art and Remembrance © Art and Remembrance. From the picture: “April 1941. As my father was praying on Erev Pesach, two Nazis showed up and began to beat him. They pulled him outside and got ready to shoot him. My mother yelled to me and my brother to get the Nazi commander to stop them. The commander wasn't there but his aide called them off.”
Figure 28: - Esther Krinitz, *16. We Fled Across the Fields* from the Fabric of Survival series.

Embroidery on cloth, 1992. 22 x 22 in. Courtesy of Art and Remembrance.

From the picture: “September 1942. After the morning raid, the Gestapo were returning. We fled across the fields to the woods, my mother directing me to separate.”
Figure 29: Faith Ringgold, *We Came to America* from *The American Collection #1* series.

Figure 30: Photograph of the Holocaust Memorial *Shoes on the Danube* taken by Viola Ratcliffe July 2014. Courtesy of the author.