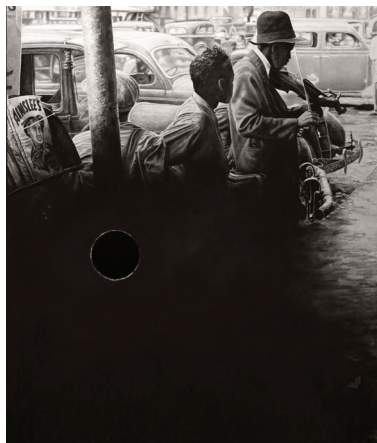


TRAVELING EXHIBITION

KILLING THE NEGATIVE



Killing the Negative: Poetic Interventions— Intentionally damaged negatives from a WPA commission led artist Joel Daniel Phillips and poet Quraysh Ali Lansana into a multi-media project that explores complex intersections of representation, truth, and power. Adapted from a forthcoming exhibit at the Philbrook Museum of Art, the artist and a group of noted American poets such as US Poet Laureate Joy Harjo and North Carolina Poet Laureate Jaki Shelton Green explore crucial concepts that are at the center of our contemporary society.

While looking through materials on Works Progress Administration (WPA) projects, visual artist Joel Daniel Phillips stumbled upon an image—a 1936 photograph by Walker Evans with a gaping black hole in the center. This chance discovery of a “killed negative” led Phillips and poet Quraysh Ali Lansana into a collaborative project, *Killing the Negative: Poetic Interventions*.

With the stated goal of “introducing America to Americans,” the Farm Security Administration (FSA) commissioned photographers to travel across the United States and document the hardships of the Great Depression between 1935-43. Roy E. Stryker, who headed the information division of the FSA, screened hundreds of thousands of negatives submitted by the photographers. He wielded his editorial power through an irreversible act—by punching holes in 35mm negatives. Once punched, the images could not be used—whether in popular magazines or in Congressional presentations about the plight of Americans. This destructive editing process was called “killing the negative.”

Phillips transforms the historic images into large-scale, immersive graphite drawings (meticulously reproduced as giclee prints for exhibition purposes), which urge viewers to confront not just the realism of the image, but also the personal and cultural implications of stories embedded within

the image. The poets respond to the image with interventions of text, sound, and breath to give voice to the subject. In each collaboration, poet and artist together fill the vacant space left by government censorship and create an entirely new conversation about power, representation, and the shaping of America’s historical narratives.

FSA photographers crossed the country to document need in America and build political and popular support for progressive social programs. While the photographs contributed to social reforms, the FSA initiative itself was not entirely open and equitable, and need in our communities is still present. Through these interventions, the poets and Phillips are exploring complex and timely issues that provide catalysts for important conversations about censorship, racism, agency, and equity.

This touring exhibition is an adaptation of the exhibit organized by the Philbrook Museum of Art in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

www.eusa.org/exhibition/killing-the-negative

Left Images: Joel Daniel Phillips, *Killed Negative #30 / After Arthur Rothstein*, 2020; Charcoal, graphite and ink on paper, 56 1/2 x 42 inches; Courtesy of the artist; Joel Daniel Phillips, *Killed Negative #62 / After Arthur Rothstein*, 2021; Oil on canvas, 60 x 40 inches; Courtesy of the artist; Joel Daniel Phillips, *Killed Negative #27 / After Ben Shahn*, 2020; Charcoal, graphite, and ink on paper, 56 1/2 x 42 inches; Courtesy of the artist.

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ExhibitsUSA





THE EXHIBITION IN YOUR GALLERY

ExhibitsUSA allows venues to work with our team of interpretive specialists to customize the exhibition based on spatial limitations. If your institution plans to augment or edit the exhibition you are hosting, please notify us of your plans so we can work together on bringing the best exhibition to your venue.

SUPPORT MATERIALS AND SERVICES

When you host an EUSA exhibition, you will receive a range of support to present the exhibition to—and engage with—your community, all developed by our team of museum specialists in collaboration with the project's curatorial partners.

THESE INCLUDE:

- A marketing and publicity kit with digital images and cutlines, logos, social media tool kit, and a sample press release.
- A programming guide with extensive educational resources and program/activity planning ideas for host venue staff and teachers.
- Custom-designed interpretive panels, object labels, gallery guides and/or other interactive engagement tools.
- A registrar's packet with instructions and documents for condition reporting, and installing and de-installing the exhibition.
- Custom-built crates for easy handling and maximum protection, along with instructions for proper packing.
- On-call logistical support.

Above: Artist Joel Daniel Phillips working in his Tulsa, OK studio, *Killed Negative #52 / After Unknown Photographer* in the upper right. Photograph by Adam Murphy, 2020.

Curator: Susan Green, Associate Curator of Special Collections, Archives, and Research at Philbrook Museum of Art

Organized by: ExhibitsUSA

Content: 22 drawings (in reproduction form) paired with 19 poems (text on panels, with audio/headphones and QR codes for video access)

Duration: 7-week display

Out-of-Region Rental Fee: \$5,850

In-Region Rental Fee: \$9,750

(In-region states: Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Texas)

Shipping expense: Exhibitor is responsible for payment of outgoing shipping.

Security: Standard

Run. ft.: TBD

Number of Crates: 4

Total Weight: TBD

Insurance: The exhibition is fully insured by ExhibitsUSA at no

additional expense to you, both while installed and during transit.

DATES AVAILABLE:

Killing the Negative: Poetic Interventions is touring September 2026 through August 2031. The dates below reflect 7-week exhibition periods. Dates are subject to change; please contact MoreArt@maaa.org or (800) 473-3872 x208/209 for current availability.

January 28–March 16

April 6–May 25

June 16–August 11

September 1–October 20

November 20–January 7