

for this fact alone as many people over the last half century have decided to dedicate significant time and resources to supporting work by African American artists. However, Williams has used his collecting as a means of supporting artists through a variety of other strategies such as the widespread dispersal of their work to various institutions, the management of their estates, and his membership on the boards of different museums and arts organizations. While these various strategies fall outside the purview of what is traditionally understood as “collecting,” they are integral to what I term as Williams’s “activist-collecting” practice. I argue in my honors thesis that Williams’s activist-collecting is driven by a desire to ensure the preservation of African American art and to see the genre enter into the canon of American art. Understanding Williams’s activist-collecting can bring scholars closer to fully grasping the impact of actors like him who have played an important role in the development of African American art history.

One tenet of Williams’s activist-collecting is his membership on the board of the Souls Grown Deep Foundation. The organization was founded by Atlanta-based scholar Bill Arnett, who developed a profound interest in work b

and see that they start to earn their due critical recognition as important works of American art.

With the support of the Grua/O’Connell Research Award, I was able to travel to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill during Winter Break to visit the archives of the Souls Grown Deep Foundation in order to learn more about its history and the artists it supports. I also travelled to Los Angeles during Spring Break to see a traveling exhibition of works from

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