

Biographies:

Deborah Willis and Hank Willis Thomas

Deborah Willis and Hank Willis Thomas are a mother-and-son collaborative that explore the impact of family, history and memory on the process of artistic production.

As individual artists, Willis and Thomas take different approaches to the photographic object. Willis has a classical relationship to the camera, having produced most of her body of work on film. By comparison, Thomas's practice is fundamentally digital; he creates many of his images on screen without having used film at all.

Deborah Willis is currently Professor and Chair of the Department of Photography and Imaging at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts. She works as an artist, photographer, and curator and historian of photography. She's received numerous awards and honors, including a 2000 MacArthur Foundation "Genius Grant." In 2014, she co-produced the documentary film *Through a Lens Darkly: Black Photographers and the Emergence of a People*. This film, based on her book *Reflections in Black: A History of Black Photographers 1840 to the Present*, illustrates how African Americans have used photography to document and bring about social changes.

Hank Willis Thomas (b. 1976) is a visual and conceptual artist and photographer who explores race and popular culture in his work. His focus on the African-American male body --- especially in advertising --- is evident in several of his series. He is currently a DuBois Institute Fellow at Harvard University.

References

Jack Shainman Gallery. (2015). *Hank Willis Thomas*.

<http://www.jackshainman.com/artists/hankwillis-thomas>

Willis, Deb. <http://debwillisphoto.com/home.html>

Willis, Deborah, Hank Willis Thomas, and Kalia Brooks. (2009). *Progeny: Deborah Willis and Hank Willis Thomas*. New York: Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Art Gallery, Columbia University.