

Amilia Estrada

Major: Journalism

College: Arts & Media

Mentor: Julia Rendleman

SRI 2025 Research Title & Abstract: Establishing Space: Representation and Resistance in African American Women's Curatorial Practices

This research investigates how African American women artists and curators establish space for marginalized voices through visual storytelling, curatorial intention, and institutional critique. Rather than assimilating into dominant art institutions, these practitioners reimagine and reshape cultural spaces to reflect their own histories and identities. Fern Logan, an African American artist and curator working in Southern Illinois, exemplifies this approach by centering BIPOC and LGBTQ+ artists within predominantly white institutions. As part of this study, I traveled to Memphis to deepen the regional context by interviewing artist-curator Jay Etkin and Keyana Dixon, the sister of Tyre Nichols and co-curator of an exhibition honoring his life and work. This project highlights the labor required to achieve visibility and the critical role of African American women curators.