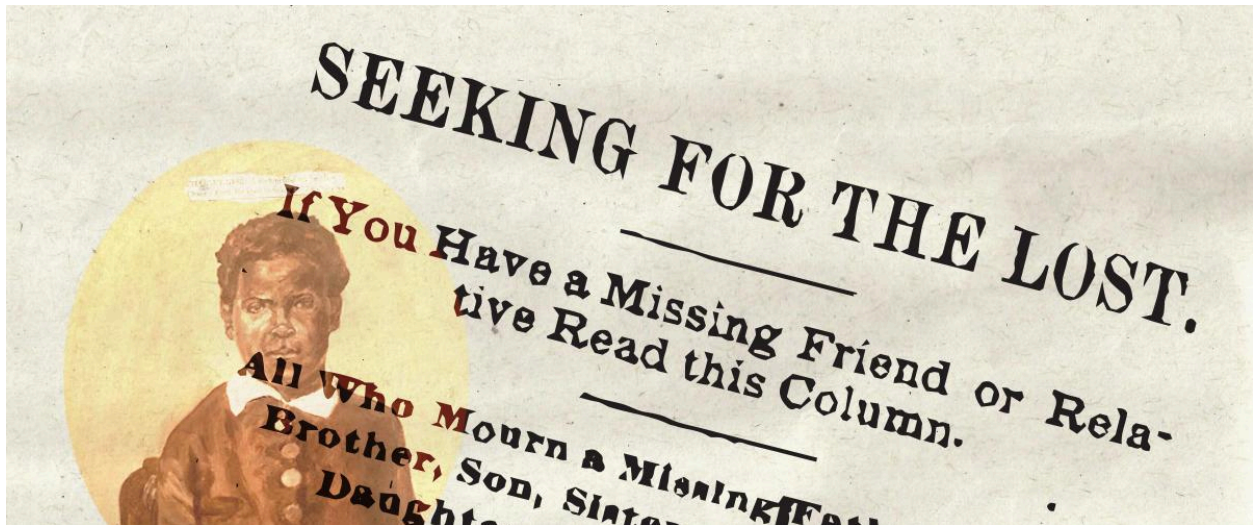




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Weisman Art Museum presents *Seeking for the Lost*, portraits by Christopher E. Harrison of those sold or “lost” during slavery, as described in local Black newspaper classified ads from the period

June 28, 2024, Minneapolis, MN: Weisman Art Museum (WAM) presents [Seeking for the Lost](#), on view from **August 3, 2024 – February 16, 2025**. This exhibition views the details of often overlooked histories, with an artistic lens. Featuring portraiture by contemporary artist [Christopher E. Harrison](#), *Seeking for the Lost* explores the unbreakable familial bonds expressed through ads in the St. Paul newspaper *The Appeal*; presents the post-Reconstruction goals of Minnesota’s Black press; and shows how literacy informed the lives of Black Americans after the Civil War.

Organized by the [African American Interpretive Center of Minnesota](#) and curated by **JoJo Bell**, the exhibition centers on the eponymous “Seeking for the Lost” column from *The Appeal*, a Black-owned and operated St. Paul newspaper. The column printed ads from formerly enslaved people seeking family members who had been sold or “lost”

during slavery and through the post-Reconstruction period. Informally, small ads started appearing in the paper in 1888; by 1891, *The Appeal* was publishing the ads as a permanent column. *The Appeal* was not the first paper to print such ads, but in this newspaper the ads were free, signaling the publication's significant commitment to help readers find family, at no cost, as well as its resolve to uplift a new, post-Reconstruction generation desperate to reconnect with loved ones lost to slavery.

Each painting by Christopher Harrison in the exhibition imagines what a missing subject described in "Seeking for the Lost" might have looked like. By portraying each lost family member with a distinct perspective and personality, Harrison's art emphasizes kinship as a unifying power and literacy as a means of endurance.

WAM senior curator, Diane Mullin, says: "We were immediately interested in presenting this fascinating exhibition of an important chapter in the state's, and country's, history — that of the Black experience in the immediate aftermath of the Civil War and its reverberation to the present day."

"*Seeking for the Lost* sheds light on the existence of important networks of reunion for Black families in the years immediately following the Civil War," writes exhibition curator JoJo Bell. "We hope the exhibition will be revelatory about African American history in Minnesota."

Thanks to Minnesota Transform: A Just University for Just Futures for their support of this exhibition. General operating support for Weisman Art Museum's exhibitions and programs is generously provided by Ameriprise Financial, the Art and Martha Kaemmer Fund of HRK Foundation, and the KHR McNeely Family Fund, thanks to Kevin, Rosemary, and Hannah Rose McNeely.

Also upcoming this fall at the Weisman

[*Kara Walker: Harper's Pictorial History of the Civil War \(Annotated\)*](#)

On view: September 27, 2024 - January 5, 2025

The Weisman's featured exhibition this fall, organized by the New Britain Museum of American Art and Museum Box, presents Kara Walker's print portfolio, *Harper's Pictorial History of the Civil War (Annotated)*, 2005. This suite of 15 large-scale prints considers experiences of racism and violence against African Americans that were absent or only alluded to in dominant historical representations of the Civil War. Shown with Walker's series is a group of 13 original *Harper's Weekly* engravings of the Civil War by the New England-born and -based, nineteenth century American realist artist, Winslow Homer (1836-1910). While not all of Walker's "annotated" works are addressed to Homer

works, this pairing—of Walker’s contemporary prints with examples of works from the *Harper’s* material that inspired her—opens opportunities to consider both the connections and distinctions between the two bodies of work.

Image credit: Composite graphic by Weisman Art Museum, with a detail from a portrait by Christopher E. Harrison, overlaid on a cropped detail from an archival scan of a “Seeking for the Lost” column in *The Appeal*, courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society.

About Weisman Art Museum

Since its origin in 1934, Weisman Art Museum has been a campus museum for the University of Minnesota. Today, our mission as a university art museum is to create and advance inclusive arts experiences to broaden understanding of ourselves, our communities, and our world. The Weisman is located at 333 East River Road, Minneapolis, on the University of Minnesota Twin Cities campus. Gallery admission is always free and open to the public. For more information, visit www.wam.umn.edu.

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