

jada-amina

Curator | Cultural Worker | Artist

Chicago, IL | jadaaminah@gmail.com

jadaamina.com

Education

Northwestern University

2026-present | *MFA in Art Theory and Practice, in progress*

School of the Art Institute of Chicago

2020 | *BFA*

Otis College of Art and Design

2016-2018 | *Undergraduate coursework in Sculpture New Genres and Arts Education*

Professional Appointments

Black Harvest Film Festival, Gene Siskel Film Center | Chicago, IL

Lead Curator | 2023-present

Leads curatorial vision and programming for the annual festival, developing screenings, conversations, panels, and community-centered workshops focused on Black storytelling across the African diaspora. The 2024 festival represented 18 countries and welcomed more than 100 special guests. The 32nd edition is scheduled for November 6-15, 2026.

Black Harvest Film Festival, Gene Siskel Film Center | Chicago, IL

Coordinator | 2022

Developed educational and public programs with Chicago Public Library; prepared supplementary materials and curated book lists connecting diasporic cinema and literature.

South Side Community Art Center | Chicago, IL

Public Programs and Engagement Manager | 2024-present

Curates workshops, artist talks, and symposia connecting Black history and contemporary cultural practice. Collaborates with local and international artists on community-centered programs.

Chicago International Film Festival | Chicago, IL

Black Perspectives Features Programmer | 2026

Programmer for the Black Perspectives program during its 30th anniversary year, presented at the 62nd Chicago International Film Festival, October 14-25, 2026.

Old Town School of Folk Music | Chicago, IL

Community Ventures Coordinator | 2022-2025

Coordinated international artist residencies, concerts, school visits, workshops, and public programs connecting global folk traditions with local communities. Co-founded the inaugural Black Histories Folk Futures Symposium.

Professional Experience

University of Chicago, Department of Linguistic Anthropology

Research Assistant | 2022

Contributed to research in linguistic anthropology focused on diasporic language and cultural studies.

Chicago Reader

Poetry Corner Guest Curator | March 17-June 9, 2022, seven issues

NBC Chicago PD

Property Assistant | 2021-2022

Step Up Women's Network

Teen Programs Facilitator | 2019-2020

Marwen

Teaching Artist | 2019-2020; Student and Family Engagement Administrative Assistant | 2019

Urban Juncture

Historic Preservation Fellow | 2019

floChicago, University of Chicago

Program Facilitator | Summer 2019

RISE High | Los Angeles, CA

Founding Art Instructor and Administrative Assistant | 2016-2018

Awards Grants and Recognition

2026

Cinema Femme inaugural 10 Chicago Film Creatives Breaking Barriers

2025

ACSF Symposium Scholarship to support co-chairing Common Ground: Altars, Architecture, and Collective Memory

2023

Wherewithal Research Grant, Washington Project for the Arts and The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, with Anisa Olufemi, for The Gospel Truth: Sonic Architectures of Chicago House and Go-Go Music

2022

Refraction DAO Creative Grant for The Gospel Truth: The Sonic Architectures of House and Go-Go, with Anisa Olufemi

3Arts Ignite Fund for The Gospel Truth

2021-2022

Emerging Filmmakers Grant, Pentimenti Productions, for I'm Not Going to Die, I'm Going Home Like a Shooting Star

2021

Arts + Public Life Program Grant, University of Chicago

SPARK Grant, Chicago Artists Coalition

2018

Juried Show Winner, No Shade in the Shadow of the Boss, Los Angeles, CA

Merit Scholarship, School of the Art Institute of Chicago

Residencies and Fellowships

2021 | Museum Professional Seminar Fellowship, The Studio Museum in Harlem, virtual

2019 | Artist in Residence, Flood's Hall Artist Residency, Chicago, IL

2018 | LAUNCH Invitational Residency, Chicago Artists Coalition, Chicago, IL

Selected Curatorial Projects and Public Programs

2026-2027

Charles White Across Media: A Visual Archive

Curatorial assistant, with Jan Brugger | Logan Center Exhibitions and South Side Community Art Center, Chicago, IL | Upcoming November 6, 2026-January 31, 2027

Co-curates the public program accompanying the exhibition curated by Ian White.

2025

Common Ground: Altars, Architecture, and Collective Memory

Co-Chair and Co-Organizer | ACSF Chicago Salon, Chicago, IL | June 26-28

Co-organized and programmed an interdisciplinary symposium for an international group of architects, cultural workers, spiritual leaders, and other practitioners. Programs explored architecture's relationship to cultural memory, spirituality, and identity across Bronzeville, Chicago Lawn, Oak Park, the West Loop, and downtown Chicago.

litany

Curator | South Side Community Art Center in partnership with Blanc Gallery, Chicago, IL

Black Harvest Presents Mahogany at 50: On Style, Memory, and Meaning

Programmer | Gene Siskel Film Center, Chicago, IL | June 3

2024

Black Histories Folk Futures Symposium

Co-Organizer | Old Town School of Folk Music, Chicago, IL

Produced a symposium exploring Black histories and folk traditions, connecting artist residencies with school programming and public performances.

Bronzeville is Beautiful: A Living Archive

Curator | South Side Community Art Center, Chicago, IL

Curated the Bronzeville Art District Trolley Tour celebrating the neighborhood's artistic history through cultural stops, a photo booth, and community activities.

The Art of Giving Flowers: Celebrating 84 Years of the South Side Community Art Center

Curator | South Side Community Art Center, Chicago, IL

Curated an interdisciplinary evening celebrating the center's legacy through Black artists, community, and cultural memory. The all-Black creative team included a sommelier, private chef, portrait artist, and DJs; the program combined floral design, portraiture, music, and food.

Selected Curatorial Projects and Public Programs Continued

2024

Our Shared Future: Reckoning with Our Racial Past Kickoff

Co-Organizer | Smithsonian and National Museum of Mexican Art, Chicago, IL

Organized a program exploring race, identity, and Chicago's role in racial reckoning, with performances by Harold Green, Frank Waln, and DJ Rae Chardonnay, and live printmaking by William Estrada.

Holding Our Own: On Intergenerational Care in the Arts

Panelist | Smithsonian Our Shared Future and South Side Community Art Center, Chicago, IL | September 28

Participated in a conversation with Bridgett M. Davis and Maya Cade on intergenerational care and Black women's artistic legacies.

2019

Transistors

Participating Artist | Public Program, Ralph Arnold Gallery, Loyola University Chicago | February-March

Loved Ones Presents Series

Organizer | Chicago, IL

Presented Killer of Sheep with a Q&A with Charles Burnett and La Haine x Paid in Full at Doc Films, University of Chicago, and Tokyo Drifter at Harper Theatre.

We Are the Future: Reimagining Black Girlhood

Sullivan Galleries, Chicago, IL

Passion to Profession Workshop

Producer | Silver Room, Chicago, IL

The Bungalow Series

Producer | Arts + Public Life, University of Chicago

2018-2019

Not Far from Here

Curator | Touring Screening Series

Passion to Profession Workshop Series

Co-Curator and Co-Facilitator, with Anisa Olufemi | Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago

Co-created and facilitated professional development workshops including Liberation Landscapes, Best Dressed, and Happy-ish Hour. Liberation Landscapes took place December 6, 2019.

Jury and Professional Service

2025 | Juror, Artists Run Chicago Fund, Hyde Park Art Center, Chicago, IL

Selected Talks and Conversations

2026

BLKNWS Conversation with Kahlil Joseph

Designing for Dignity 04: A Convening of Possibilities | DuSable Black History Museum and Education Center, Chicago, IL | October 23

Chicago Critics Circles Part II: Claiming Space and Being in Public

Participant | Court Theatre and Arts + Public Life, Green Line Performing Arts Center, Chicago, IL | August 22

2025

For Those That Lived There

Screening and Conversation with Shawn Antoine II | EXPO CHICAGO Dialogues, Chicago, IL | April 27

Next Up In Dialogue with Chicago Creatives

Panelist | Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, The Commons | May 3

Footwork, Rootwork, and Wakework

Panelist | How to See in the Dark symposium, Co-Prosperity, Chicago, IL | June 1

2024

An Evening with Terence Nance

Conversation Moderator | 30th Black Harvest Film Festival, Gene Siskel Film Center, Chicago, IL | November 9

The Art of Filmmaking and The Business of Filmmaking

Moderator | Inaugural Chicago Film Symposium, Sisters in Cinema, Chicago, IL | August 17

Sonic Architectures of Chicago House Music: Black Atlantic Memory and Monument in the Urban Landscape, ACSF 14: Resonance of the Past, Spirit of the Future, Istanbul, Turkey, June 7

Feedback: A Long-Distance Call from Lagos to Chicago, Mariane Ibrahim Gallery, Chicago, IL

2023

Meet the Curators with Nick Leffel, Gene Siskel Film Center, Chicago, IL, November 4

Co-Presenter, Wherewithal Research Presentations, Washington Project for the Arts, online, September 21

Jacoby Satterwhite in Conversation with jada-amina, Art Institute of Chicago, Fullerton Hall, Chicago, IL, November 14

Selected Talks and Conversations Continued

2022

Co-Presenter and Coauthor, "Trans People Exist in the Future": Even Femme Transmascs, with Tulio Bermúdez Mejía and Maple Sterling, Society for Linguistic Anthropology Conference, Boulder, CO, April 7

Keynote Speaker, Central Kentucky Linguistics Conference

2021

Panelist, Roots & Culture Artist Panel Discussion, Chicago, IL

Lecturer, Artist Talk with Youth Advisory Board, Hyde Park Art Center, Chicago, IL

2020

Guest, In the Pot with Jada Amina, Episode 5, Sometimes You're the Frog podcast

2019

Guest, We Are All Americans, Season 2 Episode 1, Michele Jaquis, June 24

Lecturer, Figures of Sympathy, Stony Island Arts Bank, Chicago, IL

Panelist, Women Forward Panel, House of Blues, Chicago, IL

2018

Panelist, Feminism 4D Symposium, Main Museum, Los Angeles, CA

Publications

2025

The Light That Lingers: Celebrating Over 30 Years of Black Filmmaking, In These Times, February 10

2024

Dialogue with Anisa Olufemi, E-Merge zine, WITH(IN).DIGITAL

Sonic Architectures of Chicago House Music: Black Atlantic Memory and Monument in the Urban Landscape, conference paper, Architecture, Culture, and Spirituality Forum

Selected Exhibitions and Public Art

2024

OVERRIDE | A Billboard Project, EXPO CHICAGO, Chicago, IL. Works: for your own protection (2022) and Remembrance (2024)

2023

Black Light Cinema Project, South Side Community Art Center, Chicago, IL

2022

Kickin' the Can, ACRE Projects at Drama Club, Chicago, IL

2021

Dreamscapes: Imaginings of a Black Pastoral, Roots & Culture, Chicago, IL

2019

In the Receiving Room, Flood's Hall, Chicago, IL, April 26. Curated by Anisa Olufemi

2018

No Shade in the Shadow of the Boss, Otis College of Art and Design, Los Angeles, CA
Senior Subordinate Show, Otis College of Art and Design, Los Angeles, CA

Selected Recordings

2026

[Featured Vocalist, FRIENDS \(FT. JADA-AMINA\), LoveHigher, HAVE FAITH, October 5](#)

2021

gudgud, single, March

2019

Find a Way, SoundCloud release

Selected Performances

2024

ETCETERA Capsule Release, The Native, Chicago, IL

3rd Annual Hi Cotton Ball: Bush Babe, supporting Blu Bone and Ms. Boogie, Fine Line, Minneapolis, MN

Future of Funk Industry Mixer / Funk Factory, ~Pourri x Rolling Stone, SXSW, Speakeasy, Austin, TX, March

2023

Featured Musician, Elijah Jamal musical set, AfroFuturist Weekend 8, Elastic Arts, Chicago, IL, October 5

Guest Radio Appearance, Angel Bat Dawid with jada-amina, NTS, September 26

Dark Matter Series, Elastic Arts, Chicago, IL, April 7

Sound Performance: In Response to What Pulls Me Asunder, TILT Institute for the Contemporary Image, Philadelphia, PA

jada-amina and The Kingdom Bound, Music Under Glass, Garfield Park Conservatory, Chicago, IL

Keiyaa, supported by jada-amina and Kara Jackson, Sleeping Village, Chicago, IL

2022

Guest Performance, The Gesture Itself Is Protection Spell, South Side Community Art Center, Chicago, IL, September 17

2021

The Power of the Word, Culture Coach by Elastic Arts, Chicago, IL

Selected Screenings

2024

No One's Going to Mythologize My Life, Blanc Gallery, Chicago, IL

2023

Interior Lives, Sojourner Truth Festival of the Arts, Gene Siskel Film Center, Chicago, IL, September 14.
Exhibiting filmmaker and discussion participant

2020

I'm Not Going to Die, I'm Going Home Like a Shooting Star, thesis-film premiere, Gene Siskel Film Center, Chicago, IL

A Loved Ones Showcase, Music Box Theatre, Chicago, IL

2018

Experimental Film, Echo Park Film Center, Los Angeles, CA

2017

Enter the Labyrinth, Helen and Abraham Bolsky Gallery, Los Angeles, CA

First Responders, Echo Park Film Center, Los Angeles, CA

Selected Media and Press

2026

[WBEZ, Rev. Jesse Jackson Took on Hollywood 20 Years Before #OscarsSoWhite, February 19](#)

[Better, Chicago International Film Festival 2026: Programmers Share Their Top Picks](#)

Marva Jackson Lord, Lineage, Care and Possibility: A Conversation with jada-amina, BFM Magazine, October 4

Cinema Femme, 10 Chicago Film Creatives Breaking Barriers, September 10

2025

[PrideIndex, A Place at the Table: One-on-One with jada-amina, November 7](#)

[Red Line Project, South Side Community Art Center Gets \\$15 Million Makeover, December 9](#)

Reggie Ponder, Jada-Amina, Curator of the Gene Siskel Center's 31st Black Harvest Film Festival, N'DIGO, November 10

2024

[PrideIndex, Black Indigenous & Beautiful: An Interview of Jada-Amina, November 1](#)

Tia Carol Jones, Black Harvest Film Festival Celebrates 30 Years, Citizen, September 18

Yitzi Weiner, Authority Magazine, Filmmakers Making a Social Impact: Why and How Filmmaker Jada-Amina H of Black Harvest Film Festival Are Helping to Change Our World

WGN-TV, The 30th Annual Black Harvest Film Festival

2023

[Rebecca Martin, The Liberation of the Work: A Conversation with Jada-Amina, Lead Curator of Black Harvest Film Festival, Cinema Femme, November 2](#)

[Patrick McDonald, Podtalk Curator Jada-Amina of the 29th Black Harvest Film Festival, HollywoodChicago, November 1](#)

Arionne Nettles, The Black Harvest Film Festival Is Giving These Up-and-Coming Filmmakers Their Big Break, WBEZ, November 2

Nia Ali, Chicago's Natural-Born Creativity Shines at the Black Harvest Film Festival, The TRiiBE, November 2

RogerEbert.com, Black Harvest Film Festival 2023 Highlights: John Singleton, Tyler Perry, and a Vibrant Artistic Community

Newcity Film, Black Harvest: The Past, Future, and Present of Diaspora Film

Block Club Chicago, Black Harvest Film Festival Puts Revolutionary Visions on Screen

Chicago Reader, Black Light Cinema Project Brings Film to the Forefront

FF2 Media, Jada-Amina Harvey Talks Black Harvest Film Festival

2021

Bianca Jean-Pierre, Artist & Writer to Know: Jada-Amina, SHEER, May 21

[isra rene. The Black Pastoral. a Landscape of Abundance. Sixty Inches from Center. September 3](#)

Newcity Art, A Tender Offering: A Review of Dreamscape at Roots & Culture, August 13