Spotlight on

Susan H. Edwards

**Curatorial Fellow** 



Mouminatou Thiaw



I was living in Nairobi, Kenya, as an artist, researcher, and recent graduate with a degree in Africana and media studies when I learned of the Susan H. Edwards Curatorial Fellowship.

Nine months later, I arrived in Nashville, Tennessee, for the very first time. I had one bag, seventy dollars, and all the courage of my loved ones. It was more than enough. I felt proud and incredibly nervous to explore this engagement with the art world, to learn the behind-thescenes work of a profession I had informally explored but knew little about. I was welcomed into the community at the opening of María Magdalena Campos-Pons: Behold and experienced a warm gathering of people from around the world. Like me, they were drawn to the Frist by threads connecting the global ecosystem of art, people, and learning. As I observed the leadership and dedication around me, I saw insatiable curiosity, diligence, and a true love for the arts. My ways of seeing the world as a Senegalese American woman and artist have been celebrated as I gained perspective on my strengths and faced my areas for growth. I learned about crucial roles in the museum world; some of my favorites included the art handlers, registrars, and conservators, perhaps in part because I am comforted by their careful hands and watchful eyes on the artworks—tactile responsibilities. My time at the Frist is intertwined with my experience of Nashville as a new home. Beyond the museum walls, I have explored spaces like the Forge, Arcade Arts, the Wedgewood Houston Art Crawl, and the 100 Taylor Arts Collective. Now, the world feels much larger, and time has passed quickly, though there is still so much I want to learn about. This both energizes and intimidates me—feelings I believe will continue throughout my twenties and thirties as my dreams expand and shift. I am amazed to experience the flourishing art scene here through the eyes and ears of its artists, curators, and community organizers in the city and have found friendships through the Frist that have already become dear to me.

What is next for me is, of course, to curate a show—to support the local landscape of artists and visual arts in Nashville and put my learning to work! I am thrilled to share that an amazing opportunity has landed in my and Frist Curatorial Intern Mac Cooper's hands. We have co-curated *Spectacle: Sean Higgins and Alexis Jones* at the Arcade Arts Gallery 56, on view May 10–June 14. This year at the Frist has given me both professional development and a place to rest. I will continue to learn curation and make art, making the most of my time here in Nashville until I decide on a graduate program. I am hopeful that the same courageous spirit that brought me here from so far away will also lead me to my next adventure. For now, my home is Nashville, and I will always cherish this time with the Frist as a curatorial fellow.

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2024–25 Susan H. Edwards Curatorial Fellow