



Robinson, Shantay. "The Year in Black Art: A Wealth of Blockbuster Exhibitions," ARTnews, December 22, 2023.



Kwame Brathwaite  
Untitled (Garvey Day, Deedee in Car) , 1965 c., printed 2018  
Archival pigment print, mounted and framed  
AJASS\_Loc\_71\_001-A  
20 x 30 inches  
50.8 x 76.2 centimeters

Kwame Brathwaite's photography produced an Afro-diasporic shift in thinking about the physical characteristics of Blackness. His 2023 exhibition at the Art Institute of Chicago, "Kwame Brathwaite: Things Well Worth Waiting For" (named after a review the photographer penned about Stevie Wonder's album *Songs in the Key of Life*), surveys a 20-year span of the artist's work.

Grace Deveney, curator of the exhibition, told a PBS outlet, "He's essentially synonymous with the Black Is Beautiful movement, in developing the aesthetic that we associate with it and creating the images that allow us to look back and understand its trajectory."

The exhibition that occupied two galleries at the museum displayed a broad swath of Brathwaite's work, including magazine photography and articles, album covers, and color slides from the 1960s to the 1980s. Because most of Brathwaite's work was commercial in nature, much of this material was on view in an exhibition for the first time.

In 1974 Brathwaite traveled with the Jackson Five to Africa to document their tour, and in the same year he photographed Muhammad Ali and George Foreman's "Rumble in the Jungle" boxing match in the Democratic Republic of Congo. He was also a photographer of album covers for the iconic jazz label Blue Note Records. And he photographed legends, including Bob Marley, Thelonius Monk, Cicely Tyson, and many others.

In addition to the star power that his camera captured, he also documented the social and cultural dynamics of his time in photographs that depicted Black people as beautiful. Sadly, Brathwaite passed away five weeks after the exhibition opened.