L I S A F A N N I N G

N A R R A T I V E B I O G R A P H Y



"To find peace in life, you have to find that harmony between past, present and future." - Sophiline Cheam Shapiro

Lisa Fanning, a proud Gen Xer born in the American Midwest, credits her African American mother—a cinephile, poet, and voracious reader—for igniting her lifelong curiosity about the world beyond their hometown of Richmond, Indiana. Her late mother taught her to dream boldly and appreciate diversity in people, culture, and thought. These lessons shaped Lisa's adventurous spirit and led her to experience life in Senegal, France, Germany, Brazil, Portugal, Switzerland, Italy, and many other countries. Fluent in French, Lisa has lived in France and Germany, and these experiences became the foundation for her global perspective as a student, professional, artist, and traveler.

Education was a core value in Lisa's upbringing, instilled by her mother and maternal grandfather, and supported by a local circle of African American women she calls "Black Pearls," who nurtured her growth and resilience. Lisa became the first in her family to earn a college degree, completing her senior year abroad in Strasbourg, France, and graduating with a bachelor's degree in French from Indiana University. A graduate fellowship took her to the Washington, DC metro area, where she earned a master's degree in Intercultural Communication with a specialization in French language and culture from the University of Maryland – Baltimore County. From there, she launched a distinguished career in international affairs and diversity strategy that spanned over three decades.



Lisa at the Embassy of France in Washington, DC with the U.S. Secretary of Education Dick Riley and other Department of Education (DOE) officials in 2000. I was the Deputy Director of the Institute for International Public Policy which received funding from the DOE.

Lisa has served as a leader and changemaker with nonprofits, international associations, U.S. government agencies, and ministries across Africa and the Middle East—including projects in Botswana, Guinea-Conakry, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia, Yemen, and Saudi Arabia. Her expertise lies in intercultural engagement, workforce, professional, and leadership development; international education and training; inclusive recruitment and retention practices; and institutional capacity building. She has designed and managed fellowships and training programs that have positively impacted hundreds of students, mid-career professionals, faculty, and executives—especially groups underrepresented in international affairs, higher education, and healthcare. She served most recently as the Director of Multicultural Access, Success, and Outreach at Indiana Tech.



Lisa with the 2016 cohort of the Minority Medical Students Award Program (MMSAP). In my capacity as the Deputy Director of Diversity Programs for a DC-based medical specialty society, I led a national recruitment and retention medical fellowship program for students underrepresented in a medicine for 12 years.



Lisa and colleagues in 2000 following a reception at the U.S. Department of State (DOS). Secretary of State Colin Powell gave remarks during the reception. In my capacity as the Deputy Director of the Institute for International Public Policy (IIPP), I forged a partnership between IIPP and the DOS for Foreign Service recruitment.



Following our one-day workshop, Black History Revealed at the DC Public Library in Washington, DC (2025). I am pictured with my three workshop co-presenters, a DCPL staff member, and one of the workshop attendees.

A lifelong seeker of origins and connections, Lisa is also a genealogist, family historian, and genetic genealogy expert with 30 years of research experience. She explores the complexities of African American ancestry, focusing on histories of enslavement and migration in Tennessee, Kentucky, and Georgia; Tri-Racial Isolate communities in North Carolina; and free Black settlements in southern Indiana. She proudly traces her lineage to Kate Anderson, born in 1670 and emancipated in 1712 in Norfolk, VA. Lisa contributes her genetic genealogy skills to national volunteer efforts like the DNA Doe Project, the Tulsa Race Massacre DNA Identification Project, and DNA Search Squad. She serves on the Board of Directors of the National Genealogical Society and the leadership team of the Midwest African American Genealogy Institute (MAAGI). Her presentations and media appearances span national and international platforms such as PBS's Finding Your Roots with Henry Louis Gates, USA Today, and WOIO/Cleveland 19's Unidentified, and the United Nations Forum on People of African Descent (2025 Fourth Session).

Lisa is also an award-winning photographic artist. Her first photojournalistic project was in 2008 when she served as the official photographer for the President of the Republic of Mali during his state visit to Washington, DC. Later in 2013, she did a 360-multimedia project for Nordic Style Magazine titled Nordic Jazz Lights Up the City of Duke Ellington. Her photography has been featured in solo and group exhibitions across the U.S. and internationally, and she is a proud member of The Exposure Group African American Photographers Association. Her visual storytelling often explores the beauty of culture, everyday life, and the Black experience.

Beyond her many professional achievements, Lisa is passionate about the arts, global cultures, food, music, memoirs, and storytelling in all forms. She's an ardent fan of Old School R&B Senegalese culture and the musical traditions of the Sahel region. A lover of cozy mysteries and memoirs, she reads widely and deeply, always curious about how people live, love, remember, and grow. At every stage of her life, Lisa Fanning has embraced the world with wonder, courage, and purpose—and invites others to do the same.



That's me in the bottom right-hand corner in the gray suit next to Bush's photographer, Eric Draper.

Full Outline of Photography Career

Awards/Honors

2018 Julia Margaret Cameron Award, United Kingdom, Finalist, Manipulation and Collage

2017 American Art Award, Named one of 300 of the World's Best Contemporary Artists for 2017, Featured in the Huffington Post

2015 For The Record: Artfully Historic DC, The Historical Society of Washington, Folklife in Deanwood, second place

2013 Nordic Style Magazine, Iceland, guest culture and arts blogger (360 multimedia project) DC Nordic Jazz Festival, Washington, DC

2010 Urban Realism - C Art Gallery, Seattle, WA, People's Choice Award

2009 Art Acquisition Grant, 3 photographs purchased by the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities for the DC Art Bank Program

2008

- Selected as the Official Photographer for the President of the Republic of Mali during his visit to Washington, DC. Covered meetings at the White House with President Bush and the Pentagon with the Deputy Secretary of Defense

- Glimpses in Time: An International Juried Photography Exhibition in Honor of James Van Der Zee –Resting Place, Oakland, CA, juror award

Solo Exhibition

2007 "Language of Light" - Leeds Gallery, Earlham College, Richmond, Indiana

Gallery Talks

2021 Photography as Art: Images from the Mind's Eye, , DC Public Library, Washington, DC

2021 A Visual Perspective of DC Through the Lens of Black Women Photographers, DC Public Library, Washington, DC

Group Exhibitions

2021 Washington, DC: City of Interest, City of Change, DC Public Library, Washington, DC

2019 Colors of Life: The Exposure Group juried exhibition, Howard University, Washington, DC

2018 In My Mind's Eye, juried exhibition, Pepco Edison Place Gallery, Washington, DC

2017 Colors of Life: The Exposure Group juried exhibition, The Center for the Arts of Greater Manassas/Prince William County: Manassas, VA

2016 A Point of View: Contemporary Photography, juried by Mitra Abbaspour, Site: Brooklyn, Brooklyn, NY

2015 The Historical Society of Washington's For The Record: Artfully Historic DC, juried by Theo Adamstein, Founder and Director, FOTODC; Renee Braden, Manager, Archives & Special Collections, National Geographic Society; Brandon Brame Fortune, Chief Curator, National Portrait Gallery; Jane Freundel Levey, Consulting Curator, Albert H. Small Washingtoniana Collection, The George Washington University Museum and The Textile Museum; Kerry McAleer-Keeler, Program Head, Art and the Book Graduate Program, Associate Professor, Corcoran School of the Arts and Design, The George Washington University; Martin Moeller, Jr., Senior Curator, National Building Museum; Richard O'Connor, Ph.D., Chief, Heritage Documentation Programs, National Park Service; Klaus Ottmann, Ph.D., Director of the Center for the Study of Modern Art and Curator at Large, The Phillips Collection: The Historical Society of Washington, Washington, DC

2013

- National Auctioneers Association/USA TODAY Marketing Competition, Estate & Personal Property and Auction Crowd, Chad Metzger, CAI, Metzger Property Services
- "Takin' It To The Streets: DC Through Three Lenses" Exhibition, A. Salon Gallery/DC Arts Studio, Washington, DC
- "Bombay Sapphire Artisan Series" DC Regional Exhibition, International Visions Gallery, Washington, DC

2012

- "Bombay Sapphire Artisan Series" DC Regional Exhibition, International Visions Gallery, Washington, DC
- "Black Bodies in Motion" and "Colors of Life" Exhibition, George Mason University, Fairfax, VA
- "A Sense of Place" Exhibition, Tubman-Mahan Gallery, Washington, DC

2011 "Street Stories" Exhibition - Kiernan Gallery, Lexington, VA, November 2011

2010

- International Photography Competition (IPC)" Exhibition - Artists Haven, Ft. Lauderdale, FL
- “Glimpses in Time: An International Juried Photography Exhibition in Honor of Imogen Cunningham”, Joyce Gordon Gallery, Oakland, CA
- “Culture and Agriculture” New Visions Gallery, Marshfield, WI
- “30 Exposures” Art Institute of Washington, Arlington, VA
- "Urban Realism" C Art Gallery, Seattle, WA,
- "Nostalgia" Vermont PhotoPlace Gallery, Middlebury, VT
- "King to Obama" - Museu Afro Brasil, Sao Paulo, Brazil

2009

- “Giving Voice: The Power of Words in African American Culture” Smithsonian Folklife Festival, Washington, DC
- “Glimpses in Time: An International Juried Photography Exhibition in Honor of Manuel Alvarez Bravo” Joyce Gordon Gallery, Oakland, CA
- “28 Exposures” Art Institute of Washington, Arlington, VA

2008

- “International Peace Day” Richard J. Daley Center, Chicago, Il
- “Riots are the Language of the Unheard” The Historical Society of Washington, Washington, DC
- “Exposure: A Vision of Faces and Places” Art Institute of Washington, Arlington, VA

2007

- “26 Photographers... 66 Stories” Art Institute of Washington, Arlington, VA
- “Glimpses in Time: An International Juried Photography Exhibition in Honor of Gordon Parks” Joyce Gordon Gallery, Oakland, CA

Collections

Private

- Interior Spaces. Private Collector. Washington, DC. United States. 2018

Public

- Folklife in Deanwood. The Historical Society of Washington. Washington, DC. United States. Donated 2015
- Another Place in Time. DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities. Washington, DC. United States. Donated 2009
- Hope Floats. DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities. Washington, DC. United States. Donated 2009
- Georgetown Canal. DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities. Washington, DC. United States. Donated 2009

Contributions to Publications

Nordic Style Magazine “Nordic Jazz Lights Up the City of Duke Ellington” article by Lisa A. Fanning

Mambu Badu, Issue 2, featured artist

Art Journal Page pages 104-105 (DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities Art Bank Collection) http://issuu.com/thedcarts/docs/32under32

Art Critic DeWitt Cheng, East Bay Express, The Enduring Photograph highlights Lisa's Award Winning Photograph "Resting Place"

Art and Culture Critic Anni Irish, Park Slope Reader – Brooklyn, NY, Point of View: Contemporary Photography highlights Lisa’s photograph “Memory’s Telephoto Lens

Eu Tehno um Sonho: de King a Obama - a saga negra do note Exhibition - Sao Paulo, Brazil http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4DAs8u_YQlU

Glimpses in Time: An International Juried Photography Exhibition in Honor of James Van Der Zee
Juror: Stephen Wirtz, Color Catalog by Joyce Gordon Gallery
http://www.blurb.com/bookstore/detail/446138

Glimpses in Time: An International Juried Photography Exhibition in Honor of Manuel Alvarez Bravo Juror: Rene De Guzman Color Catalog by Joyce Gordon Gallery http://www.blurb.com/bookstore/detail/774014

NOSTALGIA: An Exhibition at PhotoPlace Gallery
http://www.blurb.com/bookstore/detail/1257003

Colors of Life: An Exhibition by the Exposure Group African American Photogrpahers Association, Inc. http://www.blurb.com/bookstore/detail/865990

Street Stories: The Kiernan Gallery Exhibition Catalogue Vol. 1
http://www.blurb.com/bookstore/detail/2585579

Smithsonian Folklife Festival 2009; Giving Voice ... 2 photos featured in video
https://festival.si.edu/blog/2009/introduction-to-the-2009-giving-voice-program

The Palladium-Item – “Shooting for Success” and “Capturing The World Through Photography”

TV One Online - Lifestyle and Entertainment Television, “I See Black People”

Short videos or links to some of my photographic work

- My Artist Talk at the Pepco Edison Place Gallery in Washington, DC Video
- My American Art Award Video
- Introduction to my Global Stories: Street Level View Series (Dakar Series) Video
- My Video Tribute to Obama called Barack Wins With Hope Video
- Panelist for Women Photographers of Washington, DC in conjunction with a photography exhibition at the DC Public Library Video
- Panelist for Photography as Art: Images from the Mind’s Eye Video

- Selected for the exhibition “If Fluid Was a Song …” Link

Lisa was one of the 21 artists in the world juror Adama Delphine Fawundu chose for Project Gallery V's online Winter exhibition titled "If Fluid Was A Song." Her photograph "Memory's Telephoto Lens" was selected for the show. Only 4 photographs were selected for the show. The exhibit is made up of artists from the United States, Canada, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Germany, Ireland, and the UK.