

White Ceiling

A television pilot.

written by
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LOG LINE

One unlikely emerging art curator's journey through the billion dollar global art world.



PILOT SUMMARY

White Ceiling. At the top of his game as a noted Blue Chip Art Gallery Curator, RANDALL DANVERS, 28, is a beautiful young man with a beautiful life in the rarefied beautiful billion-dollar global art industry. When his mentor and owner of the gallery, FIONA M LAUTNER, unexpectedly fires him, the stage is set for a battle of power, desire, ambition, backstabbing, and ownership.



PILOT SYNOPSIS

White Ceiling. The pilot sets the stage for mentee, Randall, versus mentor, Fiona M Lautner when the powerful and often ruthless, Fiona, owner of the Fiona M Lautner Gallery, decides to “go in a different direction” abruptly ending Randall’s career at the storied art gallery. With that, Randall shares with his partner, Daiken, the toils of the ‘white ceiling.’ The ‘white ceiling’ is the equivalent to the glass ceiling in business as less than 2% of art curators in the USA are African American.

Rather than seeking out another employer another “Fiona,” Randall sets out to open his own art gallery, establish his own roster of contemporary artists, and court art collectors including the most “important art collector under 40”, Ashton Astor. As one of the top emerging curators on the art scene, Randall’s contacts are vast; however, his pockets are shallow and are no comparison to his former boss and now nemesis, Fiona in this exclusive community.

In a state of shock, Randall finds himself lost on the uptown A train and ends up deep in gentrifying territory where he spots the perfect location for his new gallery. He calls the listing agent, Luis. In his first entrepreneurial act, Randall orchestrates a deal to secure this inspiring location far from the elite circle.



Unable to sign the hottest artist, Jacoby Taylor, available on the art scene, Fiona just might need Randall’s skills, connectivity, and devotion to artists. As an ‘outsider’ artist Jacoby Taylor is open to and considering signing with a smaller gallery to Fiona’s chagrin. In the thick of it, Randall neglects his partner, Daiken. Driven to success, their relationship wanes while all of Randall’s attention is placed in the activation of his gallery, Jacoby Taylor, and the cute Yemeni bodega operator, Azim, who introduces Randall to the chopped cheese.

THEMES EXPLORED

Wealth & Class

Intergeneration & Behavior

Immigration & Identity

Race & Romance

Language & Communication

Money & Ambition

Power VS Knowledge

Privilege VS Merit

Nepotism VS Hardwork

Art in Culture & Society

New York City



SEASON ONE OUTLINE

White Ceiling

Ep 01 Let Go

After cutting his teeth in the cutthroat world of contemporary art, Randall Danvers, sets out to open his own successful art gallery.

Ep 02 Love & Art

Randall struggles to make time for his partner, Daiken, while struggling to find an affordable spot for his vision and new art gallery.

Ep 03 Location, Location, Location

Randall meets uptown real estate agent, Luis Delgado, and his art gallery ownership journey begins.

Ep 04 Chopped Cheese

Randall ventures out into his new upper Manhattan community where he has his very first and very scrumptious Chopped Cheese sandwich and flirts with the very hot Yemeni bodega operator, Azim.

Ep 05 This Is War

Fiona sets her eyes on the most sought after emerging artist, Jacoby Taylor, who could easily establish Randall's new gallery with one exhibition.

Ep 06 List of Artists

With one significant artist on his roster, Randall plots to get other sellable artists.

Ep 07 Black Ceiling

As the gallery renovation nears completion, Randall shocks the establishment with a black ceiling in his new gallery.

Ep 08 Opening Reception

The stage is set for a grand opening reception, but will anyone show up and will they buy the art and Randall's vision.

Ep 09 Any Red Dots

The success of Randall's new gallery depends on how many red dots he can place next to the art.

Ep 10 De-Install

When it is all over, the artwork must come down to make way for the next exhibition.

MAIN CHARACTERS

RANDALL DANVERS, 28, one of the top emerging Art Curators on the contemporary art scene. **Self-starter.**

FIONA M. LAUTNER, 47, owner of the Fiona M Lautner Art Gallery in Chelsea, NYC. **Conniving.**

DAIKEN CHENG, 31, successful Wall Street finance guy and beau of Randall. **Ambitious.**

Our Leading Person.

RANDALL – the art curator



Our Antagonist.

FIONA – the gallery owner, mentor and nemesis



Our Love Interest.

DAIKEN – the boyfriend and banker



SUPPORTING CHARACTERS

JACOBY TAYLOR, 25, hottest unsigned young artist on the art scene. **Loyal.**

APRIL GREENE, 25, attractive, stylish Art Administrator at Lautner and best of Randall. **Reliable.**

AZIM, 27 - Randall's not so secret Yemeni crush. Middle Eastern immigrant with strong yet easy views on life. They equally become each other's escape from everything and into nothing. **LIKEABLE.**

LUIS HERRERA, 28 - Hotshot NYC Realtor who is a terrific painter and good friend with emerging art-star, Jacoby Taylor. Struggles with success of millionaire dollar deal version struggling and starving artist vibez. **FUNNY.**

ASHTON ASTOR, 37 – Art Collector trying to keep his family's \$100 million art investments relevant to the cultural shifts in the staid art world. Shrewd businessman. Money first. **POWERFUL.**

& of course, New York City.

JACOBY – the hot emerging artist



APRIL – the reliable and honest friend



LUIS – realtor, money motivated, social climber, secret artist, friend of Jacoby, humorous



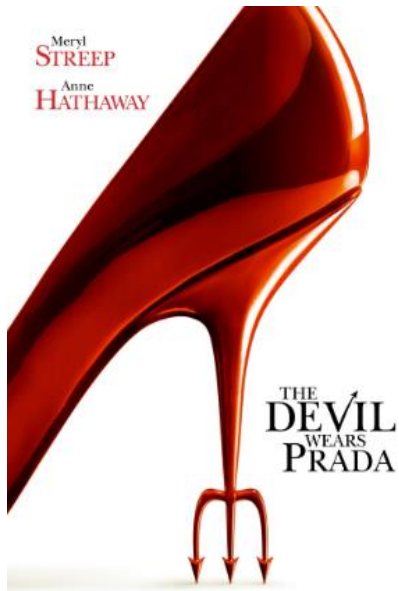
AZIM – the voice of reason, solace, perspective, and Randall’s secret crush



ASHTON ASTOR – the heir, modern day bon vivant, and art collector



tone



INDUSTRY INSPIRATIONS

Eric Monte – *Good Times, What’s Happening!!, The Jeffersons*

INNOVATOR

Susan Harris – *Soap, Golden Girls*

TIMING

Matthew Weiner – *Mad Men, The Sopranos*

PROVOCATIVE

Ryan Murphy – *Versace Miniseries, Halston, The People v O.J. Simpson*

CONTEMPORARY

Darren Star – *Sex in the City, Emily in Paris*

ELEMENTAL

Shonda Rhimes – *Private Practice, Scandal*

GAMECHANGER

All have great writing, influential storytelling, and individualized success.

WHY THIS SERIES. . .

Keeping television **relevant**.

An **authentic** presentation of a rarefied and mystified American community.

Feels **new**.

Nothing like this before.

New **voices** in the television landscape.

Very now without the cliches of marginalized and underrepresented communities.

It is the ultimate culmination of the American Dream: **rich**, powerful, beautiful, and **successful**.

Culturally **transformative**.

Another slice of American **pie**.



SERIES GOALS

The chief goal of my series is to successfully integrate the elements of smart, entertaining, drama, humor, fashion, and art in one series, *White Ceiling*. Another series goal is to introduce the audience to the rarefied and elite world of Art from an insiders' view. Lastly, a series goal is to have living contemporary artists (Derrick Adams, Amy Sherald, Stephen Towns, Amani Lewis) guest star on the series and their art featured on the series' exhibitions and studio visits.



KEY CREATIVES



Kirk Shannon-Butts is a Filmmaker, Writer and Director. Shannon-Butts holds a BA in Marketing & Arts Management and an MFA in Film/TV Production from Chapman University.

His first feature film, *Blueprint*, brought worldwide accolades and critical acclaim receiving, 'Best Film from the African Diaspora' nomination at FESPACO in Burkina Faso, nominated for 'Best First Feature' at Frameline, and shortlisted for the prestigious Gotham Awards' "Best Film Not Playing at a Theater Near You."

Shannon-Butts has been featured in *L'Uomo Vogue*, *Out* magazine's "Out 100;" and *Uptown* magazine's "35 People to Watch in Hollywood." He directed the groundbreaking #1 MTV music video, *Love*, from Caribbean American LGBT recording artist, Nhojj.

White Ceiling is his very first television pilot.

PRODUCING TEAM



Trevite Willis is an award-winning producer whose projects include *The 40-Year-Old Version*, *Cargo*, *Blood Bound*, and *Children of God*. *Children of God* had theatrical releases in the US, UK, and The Netherlands, and aired on Showtime. The film won 17 awards and sold in 27 territories. Willis is the producer of *Blueprint*, the debut feature film from Kirk Shannon-Butts.



Adrian Lopez collaborates with Executive Producers, Directors, Casting Directors, Talent Agencies and studios. His work includes independent feature films, music videos, and digital content. Lopez is the editor of *Blueprint* and the cinematographer, editor, and producer of the groundbreaking #1 MTV music video *Love* from LGBT artist, Nhojj, directed by Kirk Shannon-Butts.

CREATOR STATEMENT

White Ceiling unfolds my real life journey into the elite and elitist world of a contemporary art and art sales and the gatekeepers, collectors, gallery owners, curators, and artists who form a multi billion-dollar industry where there truly is wealth, glamour, power, lust, and intrigue unknown and inaccessible to most.

I have been working on this pilot and series for about five (5) years. Last summer, I took a TV Series Pilot writing course with In The Cut LA founder, Rae Benjamin (*Shondaland*, *The Witcher*). Every week she would say to the class about *White Ceiling*, "This feels new," "You have created a world most don't know," "These people are interesting. They talk different," and "I want more."

