The Black Embodiments Studio (BES) is an arts writing residency and a public lecture series dedicated to developing complex, creative, and rigorous discourse around contemporary black art and artists. The residency addresses the real need for arts writers who possess the creative and engaging writing skills as well as the research and interpretive skills needed to historicize, contextualize, and interpret black artists’ aesthetic and conceptual practices.

Over the course of a year, BES convenes 10 people who apply to be in residence to discuss arts criticism regarding contemporary black makers, visit Seattle galleries and museums exhibiting black art, and engage in intimate workshops with invited artists, curators, and arts writers. Importantly, BES residents develop and workshop their own pieces of short-form arts criticism (600-2,000 words) and are given the tools to pitch and submit this writing to local and national outlets. Their writing is also catalogued in the BES journal, A Year in Black Art, which is distributed for free throughout the city as an accessible archive of all of the black art staged in Seattle annually.

Three times a year BES invites artists like Will Rawls, curators such as Claire Tancons, and writers including Taylor Aldridge to the Jacob Lawrence Gallery to give public talks about their practices. Recent talks can be viewed on the BES website, where you can also find information about upcoming talks, information about the residency, as well as a calendar cataloguing black art on view in Seattle.

The Black Embodiments Studio is produced in collaboration with the Jacob Lawrence Gallery.