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search efforts in areas of interest (biomedical
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Harvard is surely glad to receive this fel-
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More schools could become subject to the
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(Perhaps some assessment will be imposed
to cover expenses associated with the non-
fellowship parts of the Chan gift.) The new
tax is an additional, and highly visible, wrin-
kle that financially sophisticated donors may
consider when deciding to how to structure
their philanthropic support for elite colleges
and universities. That comes just as Harvard
and peer institutions are worrying about the
ability of their heavily endowment-depen-
dent financial models to support research,
teaching, libraries and other academic infra-
structure, as well as financial aid.

As if speaking to these concerns generally,
in early December Moody’s Investors Ser-
vice issued a report changing its 2018 out-
look for the entire sector from “stable” to
“negative,” citing slowing revenue growth
outpaced by rising expenses (estimated at
3.5 percent and 4.0 percent, respectively, for
higher education as a whole). In partial con-
At 13, Makeda Best bought her first photo-book: Brian Lanker’s I Dream a World: Portraits of Black Women Who Changed America. (Her second was an Annie Leibovitz collection; after that, lacking funds, she made her own with magazine cutouts.) At 16, she was given her first camera—a Nikon 6600, then the fastest automatic on the market—and began taking portraits. It was the only genre she knew before college, at Barnard, exposed her to other formats: “I didn’t know what photography could be.” Later, as a student at CalArts, she mostly snapped unpeopled landscapes, especially in San Francisco, its storefronts roiled by the dot.com boom. Best had been raised there by New Yorker parents who’d struck out west in the 1970s. To her mind, “California’s a place where people escape. It’s a place where you go because you want to think freely, you want to be expansive. The East Coast is very much grounded in history.” Though she got her M.F.A., Best says, “I have nothing to show” for that time in art school. There’s no framed work, no secret box of prints—just an enduring fascination with the form’s technical aspects, which she brings to her new position as Menschel curator of photography at the Harvard Art Museums. Documentary is a special strength of the collection; Best, Ph.D. ’10, specializes in the photography of war and protest. Centrally, she’s interested in how artists struggle to capture their moment, grappling with new cameras and films. “That’s where my own background as a photographer comes in,” she says. “I can look at something and say, ‘Well, he’s trying to do this, but it’s not quite there.’” She no longer makes images, but her life is still dedicated to understanding that process: “It’s become a practice, now, of writing, of reading.”

—SOPHIA NGUYEN

News Briefs

Allston Updates

Boston authorities have approved construction of Harvard’s 9,000-square-foot, temporary “ArtLab” near the corner of Western Avenue and North Harvard Street. The facility will be sited to the west of the cluster of innovation spaces that have sprung up at the edge of the Business School campus, but is conceived in the same spirit. Construction is expected to take about one year (as reported in harvardmag.com/artlab-plans-17).

On a far more consequential scale, the preliminary filing for the commercially oriented “enterprise research zone” (unveiled in December), outlines two office and laboratory structures totaling 400,000 square feet; a 250,000-square-foot hotel/conference center; and a similarly sized apartment tower. They would occupy part of 14 acres along Western Avenue, opposite the business school—between the science and engineering complex now rising and the existing Genzyme manufacturing center. The rest of the site would be surface parking lots, at least temporarily. Harvard did