

# Press Release

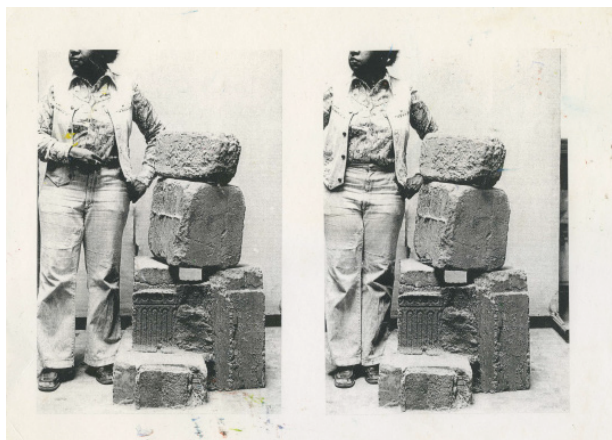


July 2016

**The Brooklyn Museum presents *Beverly Buchanan—Ruins and Rituals*, October 21, 2016, to March 5, 2017**

**Exhibition Kicks off the 10th Anniversary of the Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art**

Through incisive considerations of site, history, biography, and portraiture, Beverly Buchanan (1940–2015) produced landmark bodies of work, including cast concrete and mixed-media sculptures, drawings and books, and evocative paintings and photographs. The Brooklyn Museum will present the most comprehensive exhibition of Buchanan's work to date through approximately 200 objects, including sculpture, painting, photography, drawing, notebooks of the artist's writings, and documentation of private performances. The exhibition will also debut a video installation documenting her existing site-specific earthworks in locations across the American Southeast. Emphasizing how Buchanan's work resisted easy categorization, this exhibition investigates her dialogue not only with a range of styles, materials, movements, and literary genres, but also with gender, race, class, and identity. *Beverly Buchanan—Ruins and Rituals* is the inaugural exhibition of a yearlong project celebrating a decade of feminist thinking at the Brooklyn Museum with ten exhibitions, symposia, and a vast array of public programs.



**Beverly Buchanan (American, 1940–2015). *Untitled (Double Portrait of Artist with *Frustula Sculpture* (detail)*, n.d. Black-and-white photograph with original paint marks, 8 • x 11 in. (21.6 x 27.9 cm). Private collection. © Estate of Beverly Buchanan**

“Buchanan is a game changer—for land art, for conceptual art, and for feminist art” says Catherine Morris, Brooklyn Museum Sackler Family Curator for the Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art. “Folding these formal and political practices into discussions about her experience as a black woman living and working much of her life in the Deep South offers a remarkably enriched reading of some of the most important art movements of the late twentieth century.”

Buchanan's practice is informed by the histories of the locations where she lived and worked, including New York, Georgia, and Florida. The artist explored themes of memory and historical injustice, monument and ruin, as well as the forms and histories of southern vernacular architecture and site markers and meeting places. Referring to the importance of place for her work, Buchanan wrote in 1998, “I think that artists in the South must at some point confront the work of folk artists not so much in terms of the work but of the persons

## Brooklyn Museum

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and the work as being of and from the same place with the same influences, food, dirt, sky, reclaimed land, development, violence, guns, ghosts, and so forth.”

Exploring several bodies of Buchanan’s oeuvre, the exhibition begins with her early abstract *City Ruins* and *Black Walls* paintings influenced by Norman Lewis and Romare Bearden, her former mentors. Site-specific work is represented in dialogue with the architectural and archaeological sculptures that she called *Frustula*, from a term meaning fragments, or broken-off pieces. Buchanan’s intimate photographic portraits will be shown alongside key examples of her best-known works, including small sculptures of southern vernacular dwellings or shacks.

“I’ve read that my work is about nostalgia. It is not,” Buchanan stated. “It is about drawing with my camera and documenting old, former, slave cabins, turned tenement houses instead of drawing with oil pastels.” This engagement with social and historical memory informed both her public health career and her artwork across a range of media. By evoking unmarked and marginalized histories, Buchanan’s work questions the complex relationship between commemoration and representation.

### **About Beverly Buchanan**

Born in 1940 in North Carolina, Buchanan was raised by her great-aunt and -uncle, Marion and Walter Buchanan, in South Carolina. Growing up on the campus of South Carolina State University, where her great-uncle was Dean of the School of Agriculture, Buchanan spent much of her time in the school and on long drives accompanying Walter during his work with tenant farmers. Receiving master’s degrees in parasitology and public health from Columbia University, Buchanan worked as a medical technologist for the Veterans Administration in the Bronx and then as a public health educator for the East Orange Health Department in New Jersey. During the 1970s, Buchanan attended art classes at the Art Students League, where she studied with Norman Lewis, and was introduced to Romare Bearden and Ernest Crichlow. Buchanan was the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, an Anonymous Was a Woman Award, and two NEA Fellowships, among others.

### **About the Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art**

The Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art is a nexus for feminist art, theory, and activism. It is the permanent home of *The Dinner Party* by Judy Chicago, its Feminist Art and Herstory galleries display critically acclaimed exhibitions, and its Forum is a venue for lectures and a platform of advocacy for women’s issues.

Tour venues and dates for *Beverly Buchanan* are to be announced.

*Beverly Buchanan—Ruins and Rituals* is organized by guest curators Jennifer Burris and Park McArthur, and coordinated by Catherine J. Morris, Sackler Family Curator for the Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art, and Cora Michael, Associate Curator of Exhibitions, Brooklyn Museum.

Generous support for this exhibition is provided by the Contemporary Art Acquisitions Committee.

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**GENERAL INFORMATION****Admission:**

Contribution: \$16; students with valid I.D. and seniors \$10. Ages 19 and under FREE. Also FREE: Thursday nights, 6–10 pm, and first Saturday of the month (except September), 5–11 pm. Group tours or visits must be arranged in advance by calling extension 234.

**Museum Hours:**

Wednesday and Friday, 11 am to 6 pm; Thursday 11 am to 10 pm; Saturday and Sunday, 11 am to 6 pm; first Saturday of each month (except September), 11 am to 11 pm. Closed Monday, Tuesday, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day.

**Directions:**

Subway: Seventh Avenue express (2 or 3) to Eastern Parkway/Brooklyn Museum stop; Lexington Avenue express (4 or 5) to Nevins Street, cross platform and transfer to the 2 or 3. Bus: B41, B69, B48.

On-site parking available.