

Brooklyn Museum

A YEAR OF YES

Press Release

March 2017

The Brooklyn Museum Presents *We Wanted a Revolution: Black Radical Women, 1965–85*

Groundbreaking exhibition featuring more than forty artists opens April 21

A Year of Yes: Reimagining Feminism at the Brooklyn Museum continues with *We Wanted a Revolution: Black Radical Women, 1965–85*. Focusing on the work of more than forty black women artists from an under-recognized generation, the exhibition highlights a remarkable group of artists who committed themselves to activism during a period of profound social change marked by the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements, the Women's Movement, the Anti-War Movement, and the Gay Liberation Movement, among others. The groundbreaking exhibition reorients conversations around race, feminism, political action, art production, and art history, writing a broader, bolder story of the multiple feminisms that shaped this period.

Curated by Catherine Morris, Sackler Family Senior Curator for the Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art, and Rujeko Hockley, Assistant Curator at the Whitney Museum of American Art and former Assistant Curator of Contemporary Art at the Brooklyn Museum, *We Wanted a Revolution: Black Radical Women, 1965–85* is on view April 21 through September 17, 2017.

We Wanted a Revolution features a wide array of work, including conceptual, performance, film, and video art, as well as photography, painting, sculpture, and



Jan van Raay (American, born 1942). *Faith Ringgold (right) and Michele Wallace (middle) at Art Workers Coalition Protest, Whitney Museum, 1971*. Courtesy of Jan van Raay, Portland, OR, 305-37. © Jan van Raay

printmaking, reflecting the aesthetics, politics, cultural priorities, and social imperatives of this period. It begins in the mid-1960s, as younger activists began shifting from the peaceful public disobedience favored by the Civil Rights Movement to the more forceful tactics of the Black Power Movement. It moves through multiple methods of direct action and institutional critique in the 1970s, and concludes with the emergence of a culturally based politics focused on intersecting identities of race, gender, class, and sexuality in the early 1980s.



A YEAR OF YES
Reimagining Feminism

Artists in the exhibition include Emma Amos, Camille Billops, Kay Brown, Vivian E. Browne, Linda Goode Bryant, Beverly Buchanan, Carole Byard, Elizabeth Catlett, Barbara Chase-Riboud, Ayoka Chenzira, Christine Choy and Susan Robeson, Blondell Cummings, Julie Dash, Pat Davis, Jeff Donaldson, Maren Hassinger, Janet Henry, Virginia Jaramillo, Jae Jarrell, Wadsworth Jarrell, Lisa Jones, Lois Mailou Jones, Barbara Jones-Hogu, Carolyn Lawrence, Samella Lewis, Dindga McCannon, Barbara McCullough, Ana Mendieta, Senga Nengudi, Lorraine O'Grady, Howardena Pindell, Faith Ringgold, Alva Rogers, Alison Saar, Betye Saar, Coreen Simpson, Lorna Simpson, Ming Smith, and Carrie Mae Weems.

Organized in a general chronology around a key group of movements, collectives, actions, and communities, the exhibition builds a narrative based on significant events in the lives of the artists including: Spiral and the Black Arts Movement; the "Where We At" Black Women Artists collective; Art World activism, including the Art Workers' Coalition (AWC), the Black Emergency Cultural Coalition (BECC), Women, Students and Artists for Black Art Liberation (WSABAL), and the Judson Three; Just Above Midtown Gallery; the Combahee River Collective and Black feminism; *Heresies* magazine; the A.I.R. Gallery exhibition *Dialectics of Isolation: An Exhibition of Third World Women Artists of the United States*; and the Rodeo Caldonia High-Fidelity Performance Theater collective.

We Wanted a Revolution presents lesser-known histories alongside iconic works such as Elizabeth Catlett's *Homage to My Young Black Sisters* (1968), Jae Jarrell's *Urban Wall Suit* (1969), Lorraine O'Grady's

Mlle Bourgeoise Noire (1982), and Barbara Chase-Riboud's monumental sculpture *Confessions for Myself* (1972). Other works on view include Faith Ringgold's rarely seen painting *For the Women's House*, which she made for the New York City Correctional Institution for Women at Rikers Island in 1971; Maren Hassinger's large-scale sculptural installation *Leaning* (1980), which has only been exhibited once before, in 1980; films by Camille Billops and Julie Dash; and Howardena Pindell's iconoclastic 1980 video work *Free, White and 21*. Also on view are early photographs from the mid-1980s by Lorna Simpson documenting the Rodeo Caldonia High-Fidelity Performance Theater, a group of women artists, performers, and filmmakers based in Fort Greene, Brooklyn, of which she was a part; as well as newly unearthed ephemera and documentation relating to the "Where We At" Black Women Artists collective and Linda Goode Bryant's influential gallery and alternative space, Just Above Midtown.

"Working within tightly knit and often overlapping personal, political, and collaborative creative communities, the artists in this exhibition were committed to self-determination, free expression, and radical liberation. Their lives and careers advance a multidimensional understanding of the histories of art and social change in the United States in the second half of the twentieth century," said Rujeko Hockley. Catherine Morris added, "This exhibition injects a new conversation into mainstream art histories of feminist art in a way that expands, enriches, and complicates the canon by presenting some of the most creative artists of this period within a political, cultural, and social conversation about art-making, race, class, and gender. The resulting work, sometimes collaborative and other



times contentious, continues to resonate today.” The exhibition will travel to the California African American Museum, Los Angeles (fall 2017), and Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston (summer 2018). Two related volumes will be published by the Brooklyn Museum: a sourcebook of writings from the period and a book of new essays by art historians Huey Copeland, Aruna D’Souza, Kellie Jones, and Uri McMillan. D’Souza, Jones, and McMillan will also participate in a related symposium on April 21 at the Museum.

The exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum will be accompanied by an extensive calendar of public programming.

Related Public Programs

DJ Reception

Thursday, April 20, 7 pm

Biergarten, Steinberg Family Sculpture Garden
Free with Museum admission.

Get a first look at *We Wanted a Revolution: Black Radical Women, 1965–85* and join DJ Reborn as we pay tribute to the revolutionary music of black women. Cash bar.

Symposium: *We Wanted a Revolution*

Friday, April 21, 11:30 am–6 pm

Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Auditorium, 3rd Floor
Free with Museum admission. RSVP required.

A daylong symposium features four panels introducing new scholarship, presentations by artists in the exhibition, and performances. Participants

include Catherine Morris and Rujeko Hockley, co-curators of the exhibition; Aruna D’Souza, art historian and critic; Kellie Jones, Associate Professor of Art History and Archaeology and the Institute for Research in African American Studies at Columbia University; Uri McMillan, Associate Professor of English at UCLA; and artists included in the exhibition. RSVP at www.brooklynmuseum.org.

Julie Dash Film Marathon

Saturday, April 22, 1–5 pm

Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Auditorium, 3rd Floor
Tickets are \$16 and include Museum admission.

Join a special screening of artist Julie Dash’s acclaimed feature, *Daughters of the Dust* (1991, 112 min.), and her early short films, followed by a conversation with Dash, Alva Rogers (*We Wanted a Revolution* artist and star of *Daughters of the Dust*), and Arthur Jafa (artist and *Daughters of the Dust* cinematographer). For tickets and more information, visit www.brooklynmuseum.org.

Black Lunch Table

Sunday, April 23, 12 pm

Biergarten, Steinberg Family Sculpture Garden
Free with Museum admission. This event is now at capacity.

Participate in a special iteration of Heather Hart and Jina Valentine’s collaborative art and oral history project, Black Lunch Table, which brings the exhibition *We Wanted a Revolution: Black Radical Women, 1965–85* into conversation with contemporary concerns. Visual artists of the African diaspora who identify as women are invited to join Hart for lunch and an



intergenerational critical conversation among black women artists whose work intersects art and politics. The Black Lunch Table aims to fill holes in the documentation of contemporary art history, and the conversation will be archived as a part of an ongoing oral history project. Lunch will be served.

An Evening with Alice Walker

Thursday, May 25, 7:30 pm

Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Auditorium, 3rd Floor
Tickets start at \$25 and include with Museum admission.

Acclaimed poet, novelist, activist, and Pulitzer Prize-winning author Alice Walker leads an intimate lecture inspired by her life's work and the exhibition *We Wanted a Revolution: Black Radical Women, 1965–85*.

Target First Saturday: We Wanted a Revolution

Saturday, June 3, 5–11 pm

Museum-wide
Free

Celebrate Pride Month through the lens of *We Wanted a Revolution* with performances, talks, art-making, and films that feature queer black artists and activists. Program highlights include the kickoff of our monthlong film series *Black Queer Brooklyn on Film*; poetry readings with Cave Canem fellows DéLana R.A. Dameron and Alysia Harris; and a special performance by D'hana Perry.

Black Queer Brooklyn on Film

Saturday, June 3, and Thursdays, June 10, 15, 22, and 29

Various locations throughout the Museum
Free with Museum admission.

This film series riffs on the Combahee River Collective, a black lesbian feminist organization formed in 1974, and their Black Feminist Statement. The series features new releases by young, black, queer, female-identified, and gender-nonconforming artists and filmmakers working in Brooklyn today, including Frances Bodomo, Dyani Douze, Ja'Tovia Gary, Reina Gossett, Lindsay Catherine Harris, Carrie Hawks, Taja Lindley, Tiona McClodden, Chanelle Aponte Pearson, D'hana Perry, Naima Ramos-Chapman, Isabelle Reyes, and Stefani Saintonge. The series will kick off at June's *Target First Saturday* and continue on subsequent Thursdays throughout the month. Visit www.brooklynmuseum.org for updates.

Artist's Eye

Saturdays, June 10, July 8, August 12, and September 9, 2 pm

Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art and Stephanie and Tim Ingrassia Gallery of Contemporary Art, 4th Floor
Free with Museum admission.

This series of intimate, in-gallery talks focuses on artists' practices and their works' relationship to larger art-historical and political themes. Each talk features either an exhibition artist or an artist of a younger generation.



The Watermelon Woman: 20th Anniversary Screening

Thursday, June 29, 7 pm

Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Auditorium, 3rd Floor
Tickets \$16; includes Museum admission.

Watch the remastered version of the classic *The Watermelon Woman* (Cheryl Dunye, 1996, 90 min.) and join an intergenerational discussion between director Cheryl Dunye and poet-activist Cheryl Clarke.

About A Year of Yes: Reimagining Feminism at the Brooklyn Museum

This exhibition is part of *A Year of Yes: Reimagining Feminism at the Brooklyn Museum*, which celebrates the 10th anniversary of the Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art through a series of diverse exhibitions and an extensive calendar of related public programs. *A Year of Yes* recognizes feminism as a driving force for progressive change and takes the transformative contributions of feminist art during the last half century as its starting point. The Museum-wide series imagines next steps, expanding feminist thinking from its roots in the struggle for gender parity to embrace broader social-justice issues of tolerance, inclusion, and diversity. *A Year of Yes* began in October 2016 and continues through early 2018.

Leadership support is provided by Elizabeth A. Sackler, the Ford Foundation, the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, Anne Klein, the Calvin Klein Family Foundation, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, Mary Jo and Ted Shen, and an anonymous donor. Generous support is also provided by Annette Blum, the Taylor

Foundation, the Antonia and Vladimer Kulaev Cultural Heritage Fund, Beth Dozoretz, The Cowles Charitable Trust, and Almine Rech Gallery.

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We Wanted a Revolution: Black Radical Women, 1965–85/ A Sourcebook has been made possible by the Elizabeth A. Sackler Foundation. Additional support has been provided by Mary Jo and Ted Shen.

We Wanted a Revolution: Black Radical Women, 1965–85 publication and the related symposium have been made possible by the Elizabeth A. Sackler Foundation. Additional support has been provided by Mary Jo and Ted Shen.



GENERAL INFORMATION

Admission:

Contribution: \$16; students with valid I.D. and seniors \$10. Ages 19 and under FREE. Also FREE first Saturday of the month (except September), 5–11 pm. Group tours or visits must be arranged in advance by calling 718.501.6234.

Discounted \$12 tickets for *Georgia O'Keeffe: Living Modern* are available during *Target First Saturdays*.

Programs are subject to change without notice. For more information, visit www.brooklynmuseum.org.

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.

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.