

Radical Presence: Black Performance in Contemporary Art is the first comprehensive survey of performance art by visual artists of African descent from the United States and the Caribbean. While black performance has been largely contextualized as an extension of theater, visual artists have integrated performance into their work for more than five decades, generating a repository of performance work that has gone largely unrecognized until now. *Radical Presence* provides a critical framework to discuss the history of black performance traditions within the visual arts beginning with Fluxus and Conceptual art in the 1960s through present practices of contemporary artists. *Radical Presence* features video and photo documentation of performances, performance scores and installations, audience interactive works, as well as art works created as a result of performance actions. In addition, the exhibition features a live performance series scheduled throughout the run of the exhibition, including performances during the opening weekend of the exhibition.

The exhibition features work by three generations of artists including **Derrick Adams, Terry Adkins, Papo Colo, Jamal Cyrus, Jean-Ulrick Désert, Zachary Fabri, Sherman Fleming, Coco Fusco, Theaster Gates, Girl [Chitra Ganesh + Simone Leigh], David Hammons, Trenton Doyle Hancock, Lyle Ashton Harris, Maren Hassinger, Wayne Hodge, Satch Hoyt, Ulysses S. Jenkins, Shaun Leonardo, Kalup Linzy, Dave McKenzie, Jayson Musson aka Hennessy Youngman, Senga Nengudi, Tameka Norris, Lorraine O'Grady, Clifford Owens, Benjamin Patterson, Adam Pendleton, Pope.L, Rammellzee, Jacolby Satterwhite, Dread Scott, Xaviera Simmons, Sur Rodney (Sur), Danny Tisdale, and Carrie Mae Weems.**

ybca.org/radical-presence
#RadicalPresence



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UNITED  YBCA's Official Airline of the *Radical Presence: Black Performance in Contemporary Art* exhibition.

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ABOUT YERBA BUENA CENTER FOR THE ARTS: Founded in 1993 out of an expressed need for an accessible, high profile arts center devoted to contemporary art of all genres, YBCA presents contemporary art from the Bay Area and around the world that reflects the profound issues and ideas of our time, expands the boundaries of artistic practice, and celebrates the diversity of human experience and expression. YBCA is an integrated site for creative endeavor; a unique fusion of art, innovation, and ideas in a social environment. It serves as a curated platform for the dynamic convergence of artists, inventors, thinkers, producers, and the community, working together to sustain multiple levels of participation, propel short-and long-term social change, and ensure contemporary arts and living artists are vital to our society. YBCA's artistic offerings include a year-round exhibition program, two annual performance series, a celebrated year-round art film program, a community rentals program making YBCA performance spaces available to Bay Area performing arts organizations at affordable rates, and award-winning community engagement programming. Distinguished by its widespread support of local, national, and international artists in the performing, visual, and media arts, YBCA is also recognized for its innovative approach to audience-centered programs and for its partnerships with other arts and community organizations. Through its programming, YBCA invites exploration and risk-taking, quiet reflection, and active engagement.

Back cover: Maren Hassinger, *Diaries*, 1978, black-and-white photograph, 8 x 10 inches. Courtesy the artist. Photo: Adam Avila.
Front cover: Pope.L performing *Eating the Wall Street Journal* (2000), at The Sculpture Center, New York. Photo: Lydia Grey.



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JUNE 13–OCTOBER 11, 2015

rAdIcAl BLACK PERFORMANCE IN CONTEMPORARY ART prEsEnce

PROGRAMS

OPENING WEEKEND

Sat, Jun 13, Noon-10 PM
Grand Lobby, Downstairs Galleries, Sculpture Court
\$5 All Day Ticket / YBCA Members and YBCA:You FREE

Celebrate the opening of *Radical Presence: Black Performance in Contemporary Art* with a lively series of performances by many of the exhibition artists, including Jamal Cyrus, Maren Hassinger, Shaun Leonardo, Senga Nengudi, Tameka Norris, Benjamin Patterson, and a conversation with curator Valerie Cassel Oliver and Carrie Mae Weems.

Benjamin Patterson, *Penny for Your Thoughts*

12:30 PM, Grand Lobby
In *Penny for Your Thoughts*, Patterson invites participants to care for their minds by “investing in the best,” imbuing the performance with a type of humor common to many Fluxus projects. By having viewers “try on” the ideas of others, Patterson encourages them to reframe how they think while investigating the commodification of the transfer of ideas.

Tameka Norris, *Untitled*

1:30 PM, Downstairs Galleries
Norris’s untitled performance tests not only the artist’s ability to tolerate pain, but also the audience’s ability to bear witness to pain. The artist literally bleeds for art as she first cuts herself and then marks the walls in an action that gives new meaning to the term *gestural painting*.

Senga Nengudi, *R.S.V.P.*

2:30 PM, Downstairs Galleries
Maren Hassinger activates Senga Nengudi’s work from the well-known 1955–77 series *R.S.V.P.* Nengudi creates an installation out of common nylon stockings that are stretched into poetic sculptural form. In activating the work, Hassinger moves through it, pulling, stretching, and knotting the nylon and, in doing so, highlights the muscular forces of the body itself.

Theaster Gates's *See, Sit, Sup, Sing: Holding Court*

3:30 PM, Downstairs Galleries
This installation evokes a classroom that has been relocated into YBCA’s galleries. Created from tables, chairs and desks salvaged from a now-closed public school on Chicago’s south side, this installation—much like a classroom—is designed as an experience for learning created by the people assembled in and around it. Kicking off the series is *Radical Presence* curator Valerie Cassel Oliver, in conversation with Carrie Mae Weems.

Benjamin Patterson, *Pond*

4:30 PM, Downstairs Galleries
Following a score composed by the artist, participants in *Pond* stand around a grid divided by intervals of time and phrasing of sound, equipped with wind-up frog toys. The frogs are released and move across the grid according to chance-based system; the performance evolves as a cacophony of sound as each participant’s frog lands and stops in various quadrants.

Maren Hassinger, *Women’s Work*

5:30 PM, Grand Lobby
This meditative performance—in which Hassinger and four others repetitively manipulate newspaper—alludes to sewing, knitting, and other activities traditionally labeled women’s work. Their communal gestures are amplified, transforming the simple actions into a cacophonous sound piece.

Pope.L's *Costume Made of Nothing (YBCA Version)*

6:30 PM, Downstairs Galleries
This is a durational work in which a local performer, Brontez Purnell, interacts with a unique sculpture in the gallery. Purnell will repeat the performance at periodic intervals throughout the run of the exhibition.

Jamal Cyrus, *Texas Fried Tenor*

7:15 PM, 701 Mission Plaza
Part of the series *Learning to Work the Saxophone, Texas Fried Tenor* explores the importance of the saxophone in American music, particularly blues and jazz, which are celebrated as America’s original musical forms. Accompanied by Jawaad Taylor on pocket trumpet and electronics, this duo performance is a new iteration of *Texas Fried Tenor* that references musicians Ornette Coleman and Don Cherry, who were working in California in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Shaun Leonardo, *The Eulogy*

8:30 PM, Sculpture Court
This new performance, commissioned for the San Francisco presentation of *Radical Presence*, takes Ralph Ellison’s 1952 novel *Invisible Man* as its starting point. As Leonardo performs the speech given by the novel’s narrator at Brother Clifton’s funeral, local brass band MJ’s Brass Boppers performs a routine that mimics the impact of the speech, interweaving the artist’s words with choreographed moments of confusion and disorder. These words serve as a memorial, a rejection, a challenge, and call to action, all at once.

Clifford Owens, *Selections from Anthology*

Sat, Jul 11, 2 PM
Please check ybca.org/radical-presence for updated information about this performance.

In 2011 Clifford Owens asked an intergenerational group of prominent African American artists for performance scores—written instructions specifying a performer’s actions—which he then performed in situ during a residency at MoMA PS1 in Long Island City, New York. Several artists featured in *Radical Presence* are among those Owens asked to participate. For this performance, Owens will perform a selection of scores from the larger compendium.



Derrick Adams, *Communicating with Shadows: 1 Crush a Lot (number 1) [Hammons]*, 2011, digital print, 35¼ x 24 inches. Courtesy the artist.



Benjamin Patterson with audience members performing *Pond* (1962) at Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, January 5, 2013. Courtesy the artist. Photo: Max Fields.

Carrie Mae Weems, *Hopes and Dreams: Gestures of Demonstration, Performance Gesture 14, or If I Ruled the World*, 2006-7, digital print from black-and-white film on archival paper, 37 x 27 inches. Courtesy the artist.

Coco Fusco, *Observations of Predation in Humans: A Lecture by Dr. Zira, Animal Psychologist*

Wed, Aug 19, 7:30 PM
Please check ybca.org/radical-presence for updated information about this performance.

When the chimp psychologist from Planet of the Apes travelled back in time to pay our civilization a visit, she charmed and terrified humans who sensed that her kind would soon overtake them. Try as humans did to destroy Zira, and thus engineer a different future for their race, they did not succeed in ridding themselves of her or any of her talking ape brethren, who return in endless sequels and remakes to this day.

Zira is an expert in human behavior. In Ape City she conducted experiments on human subjects and dissected their brains. Her civilization was designed to avoid the human forms of aggression that lead to calamities, and her behavioral studies were key to forging that split between those hominids who destroy each other and those who would not.

For this performance, Zira shares her observations of human predation with a lecture followed by a question and answer session.

ConVerge

Thu, Aug 20, 4-8 PM
Grand Lobby and Downstairs Galleries

Brontez Purnell and collaborators present the August ConVerge. The YBCA ConVerge series is a free monthly public gathering featuring creative and generative art practices, and is a part of Third Thursdays in Yerba Buena. ybca.org/converge

Xaviera Simmons, *Continent: Dark Sound Blue*

Thu, Oct 1, 7 PM
Please check ybca.org/radical-presence for updated information about this performance.

Simmons presents a multi-sensory and multi-lingual performance based work where a buildup of a continental space is constructed through language, sight, sense, and taste.



Tameka Norris performing *Untitled* (2012) at Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, November 17, 2012. Photo: Max Fields.

ONGOING PERFORMANCES

Pope.L's *Costume Made of Nothing (YBCA Version)*

Jun 13, Jul 7, Aug 4, Sep1, Oct 6, and Oct 10

This is a durational work in which a local performer, Brontez Purnell, interacts with a unique sculpture in the gallery. Purnell will repeat the performance at periodic intervals throughout the run of the exhibition.

Theaster Gates's *See, Sit, Sup, Sing: Holding Court*

Jun 13, Jul 23, Aug 1, Sep 24, Oct 10, and more.
Please check ybca.org/radical-presence for updated information about this performance.

The following artists, curators, thinkers, and writers will hold court: Valerie Cassel Oliver, curator of *Radical Presence* (Jun 13); writer, teacher, curator, and publicist D. Scot Miller (Jul 23); artist Binta Ayofemi (Aug 1); SFMOMA associate curator of performance and film Frank Smigiel with artist Brontez Purnell (Aug 20); and artist and curator Raphael Noz (Sep 24). Other contributors include YBCA Chief of Programs and Pedagogy Marc Bamuthi Joseph, writer Claudia Rankine, independent curator Lizzetta Lefalle-Collins, Patricia Maloney of Art Practical, and more.



Satch Hoyt, *Say It Loud*, 2004, books, metal staircase, microphone, speakers, sound, dimensions variable. Courtesy the artist. Image: Peter Gabriel.