New Museum Presents
“Art and Race Matters: The Career of Robert Colescott”
June 30–October 9, 2022

New York, NY...Featuring approximately forty paintings, “Art and Race Matters: The Career of Robert Colescott” highlights the sixty-year-long career of Robert Colescott. Colescott’s bold and richly rendered works traverse art history to offer a satirical take on issues of race, beauty, and twentieth-century American culture. Often ahead of his time, Colescott explored the ways in which personal and cultural identities are constructed and enacted through the language and history of painting. He anticipated urgent contemporary discussions around the power of images and shifting political and social values, while asserting the continuing validity of painting as a critical medium for exploring these questions. This exhibition offers a long overdue celebration of Colescott as one of the most consequential artists of his time.

Colescott is perhaps best known for works made during the 1970s in which he reimagined iconic artworks to examine the absence of Black men and women as protagonists in dominant cultural and social narratives. Paintings like *George Washington Crossing the Delaware: Page from an American History Textbook* (1975) offer irreverent parodies of familiar masterpieces, while incisively critiquing America’s often brutally discriminatory past and present. His transgressive use of racial stereotypes to interrogate hierarchies of power was echoed in the strategies of younger artists in the 1990s such as...
Kerry James Marshall and Kara Walker. Along with a provocative approach to humor, Colescott’s paintings also demonstrate an adventurous formal evolution and a studied analysis of the history of Modernism. In its complex interplay of high art and vernacular traditions alike, his work has opened new possibilities for chronicling the history of America while ridiculing its grandiosity and biases, exerting a profound impact on generations of artists grappling with similar issues.

This groundbreaking exhibition highlights the depth of Colescott’s legacy as a standard bearer for figuration in the 1970s, a forerunner of the appropriation strategies of the 1980s, an overlooked contributor to debates around identity politics in the 1990s, and a sage pioneer in addressing some of the most challenging issues in global culture today. The exhibition builds upon the New Museum’s long history with the artist, including “Robert Colescott: A Retrospective,” a touring survey of his work that was presented at the museum in 1989.

“Art and Race Matters: The Career of Robert Colescott” is co-curated by Lowery Stokes Sims and Matthew Weseley. It is organized by the Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati. The presentation at the New Museum is coordinated by Gary Carrion-Murayari, Kraus Family Curator.

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ABOUT NEW MUSEUM
The New Museum is the only museum in New York City exclusively devoted to contemporary art. Founded in 1977, the New Museum is a center for exhibitions, information, and documentation about living artists from around the world. From its beginnings as a one-room office on Hudson Street to the inauguration of its first freestanding building on the Bowery in 2007, the New Museum continues to be a place of experimentation and a hub of new art and new ideas.

SUPPORT

Art and Race Matters: The Career of Robert Colescott is organized by the Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, OH.

Major support of the exhibition has been provided by the Henry Luce Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and Richard Rosenthal; the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts for the research phase of the exhibition and the exhibition itself; and the Harold & Arlene Schnitzer CARE Foundation for its support of the catalogue.

The exhibition was also awarded a Sotheby’s Prize in 2018 in recognition of curatorial excellence and its exploration of an overlooked and under-represented area of art history.

Generous support has been provided by:

Tim Blum
Jeff Poe
Adam Lindemann

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Education and community programs are supported, in part by the American Chai Trust.

Thanks to Rashid Johnson and Raymond Learsy.
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New Museum to Present the First US Survey of Works by Bárbara Wagner and Benjamin de Burca

New York, NY...From June 30 to October 16, the New Museum will present “Bárbara Wagner & Benjamin de Burca: Fives Times Brazil,” the first survey exhibition in the United States featuring works by Bárbara Wagner (b. 1980, Brasília, Brazil) and Benjamin de Burca (b. 1975, Munich, Germany). Working together for a decade, the duo produces films and video installations that feature protagonists engaged in cultural production, collaborating with non-actors to make their films—from writing scripts to staging performances on camera. The resulting works are marked by economic conditions and social tensions present in the contexts in which they are filmed, giving urgency to new forms of self-representation through voice, movement, and drama.

Installed on the Third Floor, “Five Times Brazil” will focus on five projects developed by the artists over a period of particular socio-political turmoil in Brazil: ***Faz que vai [Set to go]*** (2015) focuses on four dancers whose practices complicate the relationship between traditional and contemporary frevo in northeast Brazil; ***Estás vendo coisas [You are seeing things]*** (2016) delves into the landscape of Brega music in Recife; ***Terremoto Santo [Holy Tremor]*** (2017) turns to gospel produced and performed by young preachers, singers, and composers in rural Pernambuco; ***Swinguerra*** (2019), commissioned for the Brazilian Pavilion in the 58th Venice Biennale, looks into dance competitions in the outskirts of Recife; and a new piece, ***Fala da***
"Terra [Voice of the Land] (2022) features the practice of Coletivo Banzeiros, a theater group composed of members of the Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (Landless Workers’ Movement)—an organization that has been fighting for land reform and against social inequities affecting rural workers in Brazil for forty years. Together, the works in the exhibition highlight the strength and complexity of artistic expression, and demonstrate how culture can offer profound sources of resistance and community.

“Bárbara Wagner & Benjamin de Burca: Five Times Brazil” is curated by Margot Norton, Allen and Lola Goldring Curator, and Bernardo Mosqueira, ISLAA Curatorial Fellow, and is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue published by the New Museum. The catalogue includes a conversation between the artists and Margot Norton; and texts by Vivian Crockett, Bernardo Mosqueira, and Wendelien van Oldenborgh.

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Support for this exhibition is provided by the Toby Devan Lewis Emerging Artists Exhibitions Fund.

Artist commissions are generously supported by the Neeson / Edlis Artist Commissions Fund.

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Image: Bárbara Wagner & Benjamin de Burca, Faz que vai [Set to go], 2015 (still). HD 2K video, color, 5.1 sound; 12:00 min. © Bárbara Wagner & Benjamin de Burca. Courtesy Fortes D’Aloia & Gabriel, São Paulo/Rio de Janeiro
New Museum Presents First New York Solo Show of Kapwani Kiwanga

New York, NY...From June 30 to October 16, the New Museum will present “Kapwani Kiwanga: Off-Grid,” the first New York solo show of work by Kapwani Kiwanga (b. 1978, Hamilton, Canada). Over the past decade, the Paris-based artist has created complex installations, sculptures, performance lectures, and films that consider myriad subjects including marginalized histories and systems of power. Drawing on her training in anthropology and the social sciences, Kiwanga’s rigorously researched projects often take the form of installations that stage new spatial environments while exposing the ways in which bodies physically experience and inhabit structures of authority and control.

Stemming from archival investigations that range from the history of decolonization to the migration of plants across continents, Kiwanga’s artworks bring attention to the backstories of systems of authority and their embodied effects. Through this research process, her installations articulate a type of historical imagination, but they do so by constructing unique perceptual encounters with fluidity and estrangement.

Installed in the New Museum’s Fourth Floor gallery, the exhibition debuts new commissions alongside recent work, which together bridge historical research with a site-specific spatial
intervention. Invoking the use of police floodlights in targeted urban areas and, by extension, the New York legal codes known as “lantern laws”—early eighteenth-century ordinances that required all enslaved individuals over the age of fourteen to carry lanterns or lit candles after dark—Kiwanga’s installation continues the artist’s investigation into disciplinary architectures and complex regimes of visibility.

The central piece in the exhibition is a metallic veil, which has been sprayed with pulverized aluminum obtained by melting down police floodlights. This scrim acts in conjunction with a large wall work nearby, which serves as both a screen and a reflective surface. Also sprayed with the remains of the transformed floodlights, this piece synthesizes the artist’s ongoing interest in revealing social and political contents hidden within materials. Taking a different physical approach, the imposing mass of Maya-Bantu (2019), also on view, is achieved by accumulating layers of sisal, a fiber native to Central America and later cultivated by German settlers in Tanzania, where it became a staple of the local economy both under colonial rule and the country’s early years of independence.

Kiwanga’s use of fiber, metal and repurposed materials highlights complex histories of exchange and exploitation, and woven together, they maintain a rich texture characterized by different layers of opacity and transparency. This tension between visibility and obscurity is amplified by the artist’s decision to present the exhibition solely in natural light, subverting the use of artificial illumination as a means of social control.

Amid the shifting patterns of natural light throughout the day, the exhibition stages a type of speculative scenario, evoking both the sudden closure of cultural institutions during the Covid-19 pandemic and a not-so-distant future when museums and society will have to operate with limited access to power.

“Kapwani Kiwanga: Off-Grid” is curated by Massimiliano Gioni, Edlis Neeson Artistic Director, and Madeline Weisburg, Curatorial Assistant, and is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue published by the New Museum. The catalogue includes a conversation between the artist and Massimiliano Gioni, a conversation between Simone Browne and Madeline Weisburg, and texts by Glenn Adamson, Rashid Johnson, Kathleen Ritter, and Yesomi Umolu.

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This exhibition is part of a three-year initiative, launched in collaboration with Kvadrat, to premiere ambitious new productions by emerging artists.

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Artist commissions are generously supported by the Neeson / Edlis Artist Commissions Fund.

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New Museum to Present New Solo Exhibition of Works by Doreen Lynette Garner

New York, NY...From June 30 to October 16, the New Museum will premiere “Doreen Lynette Garner: REVOLTED,” a solo presentation of new works by Doreen Lynette Garner (b. 1986, Philadelphia, PA), whose practice exposes the histories and enduring effects of racial violence in the United States through the frameworks of medicine and pathology by examining past and present examples of experimentation, malpractice, and exploitation enacted upon Black people. Drawing parallels to contemporary forms of displacement and neo-imperialism, her latest projects survey the forced spread of viruses and diseases to Indigenous lands in the Americas from Europe via the transatlantic slave trade and colonization.

“REVOLTED” is a visceral confrontation with the gruesome physical and spiritual consequences of the transatlantic slave trade and the multitude of inhumane tortures carried out in its name and in its aftermath. Garner’s intricate and mesmerizing sculptural objects—often comprised of silicone, insulation foam, glass, beads, crystals, pearls, synthetic hair, and other materials—uncannily evoke corporeal flesh, organs, and wounds. Proffering animal entrails and flesh bearing the marks of smallpox, scarlet fever, syphilis, and the bubonic plague, Garner presents a grotesque counternarrative to the myth of white racial purity that has been leveraged to uphold white supremacy.
Inspired by a 1773 uprising onboard the slave ship New Britania, “REVOLTED” is also a meditation on rebellion, considering various modes of resistance from the era of the slave trade to today. The exhibition’s immersive, blood-red interior is a sensorial evocation of “seeing red,” the overwhelming urge to revolt against harmful systems, and the fortitude required to do so. This new project interrogates the abuse of power, the politics of redress and retribution, and ancestral revenge, imagining ways to act out a ritualistic catharsis of the persistent forms of violence Garner’s work exposes.

“Doreen Lynette Garner: REVOLTED” is curated by Vivian Crockett, Curator.

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Artist commissions are generously supported by the Neeson / Edlis Artist Commissions Fund.

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