

MEDIA RELEASE

CONTACT:

Laurie Duke, Press Officer, Grey Art Gallery
laurie.duke@nyu.edu | 212.998.6782

Liz Gwinn, Communications Manager, The Studio Museum in Harlem
egwinn@studiomuseum.org | 646.214.2142

Five Decades of Black Performance Art to Electrify New York City from Greenwich Village to Harlem

Radical Presence: Black Performance in Contemporary Art

NYU's Grey Art Gallery | September 10–December 7, 2013
The Studio Museum in Harlem | November 14, 2013–March 9, 2014

New York City (June 17, 2013) — This fall, **New York University's Grey Art Gallery** and **The Studio Museum in Harlem** will co-present ***Radical Presence: Black Performance in Contemporary Art***, the first comprehensive survey of more than five decades of performance art by black visual artists. The exhibition, organized by **Valerie Cassel Oliver** for the **Contemporary Arts Museum Houston**, will be presented in New York in two parts: **Part I** will be on view September 10 to December 7, 2013, at **NYU's Grey Art Gallery**; **Part II** will take place November 14, 2013 to March 9, 2014 at **The Studio Museum in Harlem**. The exhibition will be accompanied by more than a dozen live performances and public programs throughout its six-month run. These include a series of performances co-organized with **Performa 13**, New York's celebrated performance-art biennial (November 1–24, 2013).

Providing a critical history beginning with Fluxus and Conceptual art in the early 1960s through present-day practices, *Radical Presence* chronicles the emergence and development of black performance art over three generations, presenting a rich and complex look at this important facet of contemporary art. The exhibition comprises more than 100 works by some 37 artists, including video and photo documentation of performances, performance scores and installations,



Maren Hassinger performing in Senga Nengudi's *RSVP (1975–77/2012)* at Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, November 17, 2012. Courtesy the artists and Contemporary Arts Museum Houston. Photo: Max Fields

interactive works, and artworks created as a result of performance actions. Accompanying the exhibition is a 144-page, illustrated hardcover catalogue, a major contribution to scholarship on performance art as well as black visual art.

“The Grey Art Gallery is thrilled to co-host this dynamic and groundbreaking exhibition,” notes **Lynn Gumpert**, the Grey’s director. “NYU is an important site of scholarship on performance art: our faculty includes *Radical Presence* catalogue contributor Tavia Nyong’o, *Radical Presence* artist Lyle Ashton Harris, and the pioneering performance scholar and founder of the Performa festival, RoseLee Goldberg, to name just a few. As NYU’s fine-arts museum, the Grey is proud to present exhibitions that augment and advance scholarship underway at the university.”

“In curating *Radical Presence*, Valerie Cassel Oliver has brought together incredible works of art and important scholarship,” says **Thelma Golden**, Director and Chief Curator of The Studio Museum in Harlem. “We are so excited to bring the exhibition to New York, and to build on Ms. Cassel Oliver’s amazing work with a full slate of performances and programs.”

Part I of the exhibition, at the Grey Art Gallery, traces the historical path of black performance in the second half of the 20th century. It begins with *Pond*, a seminal work by the Fluxus artist Benjamin Patterson first performed in 1962, and features a number of pioneering artists, including David Hammons, Maren Hassinger, Ulysses S. Jenkins, and Senga Nengudi. The inclusion of later works, by artists such as Coco Fusco and Pope.L, will allow the viewer to explore more recent developments in black performance art. The installation also features work by Papo Colo, Jean-Ulrick Désert, Sherman Fleming, Trenton Doyle Hancock, Lyle Ashton Harris, Satch Hoyt, Kalup Linzy, Dave McKenzie, Jayson Musson aka Hennessy Youngman, Lorraine O’Grady, Clifford Owens, Adam Pendleton, Adrian Piper documented by Peter Kennedy, Rammellzee, Jacolby Satterwhite, Sur Rodney (Sur), and Daniel Tisdale.

Part II at The Studio Museum in Harlem includes an array of video, performance-based photography, and documentation, alongside set pieces or objects used during or remnants resulting from the artists’ actions, marking the many methods employed in making performance. Included in The Studio Museum’s presentation are both historic and contemporary works by Derrick Adams, Terry Adkins, Papo Colo, Jamal Cyrus, Zachary Fabri, Sherman Fleming, Theaster Gates, *Girl* (Chitra Ganesh + Simone Leigh), David Hammons, Lyle Ashton Harris, Wayne Hodge, Shaun El C. 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, Jacolby Satterwhite, Dread Scott, Xaviera Simmons, Sur Rodney (Sur), and Carrie Mae Weems.

Numerous scholars have explored the history of performance art as a manifestation of radical shifts in social thought and artistic practice, but only a small handful of publications have specifically focused on black performance art. The accompanying, fully illustrated catalogue for *Radical Presence* features contributions by important scholars in the field, including an essay by exhibition curator **Valerie Cassel Oliver**. Additional essayists include **Franklin Sirmans**,

Department Head and Curator of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, who explores the early performances of Lorraine O'Grady; **Tavia Nyong'o**, Associate Professor of Performance Studies at New York University, who discusses black performance art from the perspective of sex and gender; and **Naomi Beckwith**, Curator, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, who examines the relationship between live performance and its documentation. Other contributors include **Yona Backer**, Founding Partner and Executive Director, Third Streaming, New York, and photographer/performance artist **Clifford Owens**. The catalogue also includes a chronology of black performance art since 1960; an exhibition checklist; color reproductions of featured works; a general bibliography; and biographies of each artist in the exhibition. Additional resources and information about the New York presentation will be available on a new exhibition site, radicalpresenceny.org, launching summer 2013.

Public Programs:

The Studio Museum and the Grey Art Gallery will present and/or restage a wide variety of performances and public programs. A full calendar and ticketing information will be available summer 2013 at radicalpresenceny.org.

Sponsorship:

Radical Presence: Black Performance in Contemporary Art is organized by the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston and curated by Valerie Cassel Oliver. It is supported by generous grants from The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the patrons, benefactors, and donors to CAMH's Major Exhibition Fund. The catalogue accompanying the exhibition is made possible by a grant from The Brown Foundation, Inc.

Funding for the presentation at the Grey Art Gallery is provided by the National Endowment for the Arts; Tisch School of the Arts, NYU; the New York University Arts Council; Susan and Steven Jacobson; Jane Wesman and Don Savelson; the Department of Art and Art Professions, Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development, NYU; the Grey's Director's Circle, Inter/National Council, and Friends; and the Abby Weed Grey Trust. Generous in-kind support has also been received from *The Wall Street Journal* and James Cohan Gallery, New York.

Funding for *Radical Presence* at The Studio Museum in Harlem is generously provided by Lambent Foundation.

About the Grey Art Gallery:

The Grey Art Gallery is New York University's fine-arts museum, located on historic Washington Square Park in New York City's Greenwich Village. It offers the NYU community and the general public a dynamic roster of engaging and thought-provoking exhibitions, all of them enriched by public programs. With its emphasis on experimentation and interpretation, and its focus on exploring art in its historical, cultural, and social contexts, the Grey serves as a museum-laboratory for the exploration of art's environments.

Exhibitions organized by the Grey have encompassed all the visual arts: painting, sculpture, drawing and printmaking, photography, architecture and decorative arts, video, film, and performance. In addition to producing its own exhibitions, which often travel to other venues in the United States and abroad, the Gallery hosts traveling shows that might otherwise not be seen in New York and produces scholarly publications that are distributed worldwide.

About The Studio Museum in Harlem:

Founded in 1968, The Studio Museum in Harlem is a contemporary art museum that focuses on the work of artists of African descent locally, nationally and globally, as well as work that has been inspired and influenced by African-American culture. The Museum is committed to serving as a unique resource in the local community, and in national and international arenas, by making artworks and exhibitions concrete and personal for each viewer.

General Information:

Grey Art Gallery, New York University, 100 Washington Square East, New York, NY 10003

Tel: 212/998-6780, Fax: 212/995-4024

E-mail: greyartgallery@nyu.edu

nyu.edu/greyart

Hours:

Tuesday, Thursday, Friday: 11 am–6 pm

OPEN LATE Wednesday: 11 am–8 pm

Saturday: 11 am–5 pm

Sunday, Monday, and major holidays: Closed

Admission: Suggested donation: \$3; NYU students, faculty, and staff: free of charge

The Studio Museum in Harlem, 144 West 125th Street, New York, NY 10027

Tel: 212/864-4500, Fax: 212/864-4800

studiomuseum.org

Hours:

OPEN LATE Thursday–Friday: 12 pm–9 pm

Saturday: 10 am–6 pm

Sunday: 12 pm–6 pm

Monday–Wednesday and major holidays: Closed

Admission: Suggested donation: \$7 for adults and \$3 for seniors and students. Free for members and children under 12; free every Sunday.