

**VMM
ON**

Exhibition Information

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Simpson, John Philip (1782–1847)

The Captive Slave, 1827

Oil on canvas, 127 x 101cm



GALLERY ZERO

WHY WE SHOUT: THE ART OF PROTEST

At the centre of any moment of social change or dissent throughout history, you will always find artists.

This exhibition looks at the ways that contemporary artists have, and continue to, engage with protest and activism. As our right to protest is gradually eroded, they show us its power and importance, how people can contribute to change, and what happens when dissenting voices are repressed.

Art has the power to elicit social change. Even where their artistic voice was strictly controlled by higher powers, the artists represented here have helped to contribute to global conversations around religious repression, slavery, misogyny, social justice, freedom of speech and human rights.

The act of being an artist is a daily act of will, and, often, a public display of defiance and activism.

Curated by Lee Cavaliere



The Work (Clockwise from left)

Banksy

Love is in the Air (Flower Thrower), 2005

Graffiti

Banksy is a mysterious street artist and activist based in the UK. While his identity remains unknown, his works have been seen across the world, in galleries as well as in public spaces.

Often an advocate of the struggle of the Palestinian people, Banksy has made a number of interventions in public spaces in the occupied territories. This piece was originally sprayed on a wall in Bethlehem and represents a Palestinian protester throwing a bunch of flowers. The work advocates peace, while exposing the frustrations of the Palestinian people.

Interestingly as the artist remains unknown, he recently lost a court battle to retain copyright over this, one of his best-known images.

Public domain, Ash Salon Street, Bethlehem, West Bank

Goya, Francisco (1746–1828)

El Tres de Mayo, 1814

Oil on canvas, 260 x 340cm

Goya remains one of the most important war artists of history, and is particularly known for his unprecedented depictions of the brutality of conflict and its human cost.

This piece commemorates the Spanish resistance to Napoleon's forces during the 1808 Peninsular War. An unarmed and ragged crowd of Spanish freedom fighters face the rigid, faceless French forces. It's a horrifying and emotionally charged scene, telling a personal as well as historical story.

Museo del Prado/Open Domain



Wong, Kacey (b. 1970)

S.S.T.U., 2019

Video, 9 mins

S.S.T.U. stands for Special Singing Tactical Unit. This title was inspired by the infamous violent Hong Kong Police S.T.U. (Special Tactical Unit). This live performance took place during the widespread pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong in 2019.

@2020 The Artist

The Loveliest Person, 2019

Video, 2 mins

The concept of this performance came following the Tiananmen Square massacre against the students and citizens by the Chinese People's Liberation Army. The Chinese Communist Party sent Peng LiYuan (Xi Jinping's wife) to comfort the soldiers. According to documentation, she sang the song "The Loveliest Person" to the soldiers. This song was used frequently in Communist Party propaganda, and it seemed grotesque to the artist: "Murderers become the loveliest person."

In this performance Wong plays the ghost of a PLA soldier from the 1989 Beijing Tiananmen Square Massacre, playing the funeral version of the Chinese National Anthem.

@2020 The Artist

Email to Lee Cavaliere, Director of VOMA, 2021

In 2020, the Chinese Government implemented a National Security Law in Hong Kong. Any dissent against Chinese rule has been criminalised and freedom of speech severely curtailed. Artists like Kacey Wong are in danger of arrest and imprisonment for advocating protest and freedom of speech.

This is an email received just before this show opened, from Kacey Wong to the Director of VOMA, describing his current self-imposed exile in Taiwan.

@2020 The Artist



Ringgold, Faith (b. 1930)

United States of Attica, 1972

**Offset lithograph, composition and sheet
55 x 69.6 cm**

The United States of Attica (1972), was the most widely distributed Ringgold political poster of the 1970s. This poster was dedicated to the men who died in 1971 at Attica prison for demonstrating against the deplorable conditions. This red, black and green poster depicts a map of the United States.

The dates and other details of infamous acts of violence that occurred are posted within each state – such as race riots, witch-hunts, presidential assassinations, lynchings and native American wars.

© Faith Ringgold / ARS, NY and DACS, London, Courtesy ACA Galleries, New York 2021 / Licensed by Scala

Unknown Artist

Christ Driving the Traders from the Temple, After 1569

Oil and tempera on panel, 102 x 155cm

A common image in Christian art is the scene from John 2:13-16. Jesus is shown to drive money-changers from the Temple in Jerusalem using a 'whip of chords'.

The act has been interpreted as a rejection of corruption and advantage, and an embrace of the temple as a place of prayer and contemplation. It's interesting to note that this is the first time we see Jesus as an adult, in an act of outright violence against the establishment.

Statens Museum for Kunst



Rivera, Diego (1886-1957)

Man Controller of the Universe or Man in the Time Machine (El hombre controlador del universo o El hombre en la maquina del tiempo), 1934.

Fresco, 485 x 1145 cm

Rivera was a renowned painter in his native Mexico. He was a staunch Communist and active politically, as seen through his large-scale murals. This piece was originally commissioned for the Rockerfeller Centre in New York, a major step in the artist's career.

However, the piece attracted widespread controversy due to the inclusion of Vladimir Lenin in the motif. The Rockerfellers demanded the removal of this 'Anti-Capitalist Propaganda', and Rivera refused. The work was destroyed before it was finished; the artist stuck to his artistic principles in spite of the risk to his international appeal.

The piece was then repainted in the far less visible location of Palacio de Bellas Artes in Mexico City.

© Banco de México Diego Rivera Frida Kahlo Museums Trust, Mexico, D.F. / DACS 2021 Photo Schalkwijk/Art Resource/Scala, Florence

Collier, John (1850 - 1934)

Lady Godiva, 1898

Oil on canvas, 140 x 180cm

This image describes the legend of Lady Godiva, who, it is said, went naked on horseback through the city of Coventry, in protest at the heavy taxation of the people by her husband, Leofric, Earl of Mercia. Taking place in the 11th Century, this story has inspired many artists across the centuries, as it sees a woman take a stand against a powerful man, in order to bring justice to wider society.

Herbert Art Gallery and Museum



Delacroix, Eugène (1798 - 1863)

La Liberté guidant le peuple (Liberty Leading the People), 1830

Oil on Canvas, 260 x 325cm

The French Revolution of the late 18th Century, and following uprisings by the French people have had a lasting impact on French society. The country remains heavily influenced in political and daily life by acts of protest, which drive societal change.

In this image, we see Liberty take form, as she strides forward, leading the people to the overthrow of King Charles X in 1830. Goddess-like, she wields the Tricolor flag, formerly a symbol of the French Revolution, that then became the national flag of France.

The Louvre, Paris

Simpson, John Philip (1782–1847)

The Captive Slave, 1827

Oil on canvas, 127 x 101cm

This painting by Simpson was a clear rejection of slavery and a support of abolition. The figure is presented with great respect and humanity, a statement seen as very radical at the time.

Though the slave trade had been outlawed in Britain in 1807, it had not been abolished throughout the British Empire. The painting was exhibited widely, and its sympathy for the central figure would have been highly influential in the debate raging at the time.

Art Institute of Chicago / Public domain



Scott, Dread

A Man Was Lynched by Police Yesterday (2015)

Screenprinted flag

In 2015, Walter Scott fled for his life, stalked by a policeman who then cold bloodedly shot him in the back. We all saw the video and in response to this murder Dread Scott made the artwork, "A Man Was Lynched by Police Yesterday."

This simple banner, printed with the eponymous words, is an update of an iconic flag that the NAACP flew from their national headquarters window in New York in the nineteen-twenties and thirties the day after someone was lynched. It read simply: "A Man Was Lynched Yesterday" and was part of a their anti-lynching campaign – a national effort to end that scourge.

© Dread Scott, courtesy of the artist

Koloane, David (1938 – 2019)

Mgodoyi 3, 1990

Charcoal and acrylic on paper, 69 x 108cm

This series of works span the turbulent eighties, where apartheid police terrorized the black masses fighting for liberation in a series of states of emergency. The Mgodoyi series represents the "play fighting" of the negotiated settlement and transition to democracy in the 1990s. In the Zulu language, the term mgodoyi is an insult intended for a man who behaves like a dog. This captures David's feelings around the men responsible for the settlement.

Lastly, the mongrel has also come to represent black existence in general, in a country where the majority of the poor are black. Much like the scavengers David depicted, they are forced to eke out a life in the new South Africa.

@2021 The Estate of the Artist, Courtesy Goodman Gallery



Down the Centre of Gallery One:

Save the Boards Minneapolis

Boards from the Minneapolis Protests, 2020

Mixed media on Plywood

The murder of George Floyd sparked a massive uprising in Minneapolis, and from that anguish bloomed hundreds of art pieces around the city.

Local businesses protected their premises by putting up plywood boards; these were consequently painted by local artists in an act of grassroots support for the cause.

Courtesy of the Artists and Save the Boards Minneapolis.

CHARITY PARTNER



Save the Boards Minneapolis

The murder of George Floyd sparked a massive uprising in the Twin Cities, and from that anguish bloomed hundreds of art pieces around the city. After finding solace in this newly born art, Kenda Zellner-Smith quickly felt panic as she watched these pieces vanish almost as quickly as they came.

With no background in organizing or art preservation, Kenda sprung into action, enlisting the help of friends and volunteers to call local businesses and roam the city, collecting the boards before they were discarded and storing them in her parent's garage.

Smith, now has a climate controlled storage space, over 800 plywood boards collected, and continues to work with local experts and dedicated volunteers to organize, catalog, protect the art, and dream up creative solutions to keep it in service to the community.

Further down the road they hope to develop a permanent public art display of the boards, for easy access and enjoyment by the local community. Stay tuned and donate to the cause here!



Henri Matisse

The Blue Window. Issy-les Moulineaux, 1913

Oil on canvas

130 x 90cm

Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund.

Acc. n.: 273.1939. © 2020. Digital image, The Museum of Modern Art, New York/Scala, Florence © Succession H. Matisse

Entartete Kunst (Degenerate Art)

In 1937, Germany's Nazi government held an exhibition in Munich entitled "Entartete Kunst", or Degenerate Art.

Artwork that was not purely figurative or decorative was seen by the Nazis as a threat to German traditionalist values, to the future of the country and the way of life of its people. As a result they held this exhibition, to publicly denounce the works of artists such as Matisse, Dix and Beckmann, who have come to be seen as some of the most mesmerising and influential artists of the past century. Some of these artists' seminal works are brought together here.

It is perhaps ironic that many of these works rose to prominence through their seizure by the Nazis, and eventual resale through the opaque channels of the art market. Many of these pieces remain in public museum collections, far from the families from which they were stolen.

This gallery is here to look transparently at history's more challenging moments, where art, and its destruction, were used as a means of oppression, or submission, and the ways in which these moments were, or were not, overcome.

Quotes on the walls are drawn from the original "Entartete Kunst" exhibition catalogue, and are recreated here to give recognition to how far we have, and have not progressed, since this dark moment in our recent history.

Artworks (Clockwise from Left)

Grosz, George (1893-1959)

Blood is the Best Sauce, Kommunisten fallen - und die Devisen steigen) from the portfolio \r\nGod with Us (Gott mit uns) 1919 (published 1920).

Photolithograph

48 x 38cm

New York, Museum of Modern Art (MoMA). Publisher: Malik-Verlag, Berlin. Printer: Hermann Birkholz, Berlin. Edition: 125. Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund. ©2020. Digital image, The Museum of Modern Art, New York/Scala, Florence

Dix, Otto (1891-1969)

Der Krieg (Triptychon), 1929-1931

Gemaelde / Mischtechnik auf Sperrholz

408 x 264cm

Dresden, Galerie Neue Meister - State Art Collections. ©2020. Photo Scala, Florence / bpk, picture agency for art, culture and history, Berlin

Derain, André (1880-1954)

Valley of the Lot at Vers, 1912

Oil on canvas

73 x 92cm

New York, Museum of Modern Art (MoMA). Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund. ©2020. Digital image, The Museum of Modern Art, New York/Scala, Florence

Matisse, Henri (1869-1954)

Red Room (Harmony in Red), 1908

Oil on canvas

180 x 220cm

The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg; Photograph © The State Hermitage Museum. Photo by Vladimir Terebenin. © Succession H. Matisse

Beckmann, Max (1884-1950)

The Descent from the Cross. 1917

Oil on canvas,

151,2x128,9 cm

New York, Museum of Modern Art (MoMA). Valentin Bequest. 328.1955© 2020. Digital image, The Museum of Modern Art, New York/Scala, Florence



Matisse, Henri (1869-1954)

The Blue Window. Issy-les Moulineaux, summer 1913

Oil on canvas

130 x 90cm

Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund.

Acc. n.: 273.1939. © 2020. Digital image, The Museum of Modern

Art, New York/Scala, Florence © Succession H. Matisse

From the introduction to the “Degenerate Art” catalogue, 1937

What are the aims of the “Degenerate Art” Exhibition?

It aims to start a new era for the German People, by providing through the display of original artworks, an insight into the harrowing cultural decay which took place during the decades which preceded the Great Change.

It aims to put an end to the endless chattering by some writers and cliques who, still today, deny that there was any degeneration in art forms.

It aims to make clear that this degeneration of art was more than just a passing rush of a few fools, follies, and experiments, which only died out with the coming of the National Socialist Revolution.

It aims to show that this was not a “cultural progression” of culture, but a planned attack on the essence and continued existence of art in general.

It aims to show the common root of political anarchy and cultural anarchy, which exposes degenerate art as Bolshevik in every sense of the word.

It aims to show the ideological, political, racial intentions and moral goals which were the driving forces behind the degeneration.

It will also demonstrate the extent to which this deliberately driven degeneracy attracted imitators, who, despite the latter’s earlier and sometimes later proven certain talent, character, joined in with this overall Jewish and Bolshevik nonsense.

It will show how some of the more dangerous Jewish and political leaders were able to attract a person, who might have rejected party political Bolshevism out of hand, into the service of that ideology through cultural anarchy.

ARTIST SPACE



Rosler, Martha (b. 1943)

Semiotics of the Kitchen, 1975

Performance video, 6min 9 sec

In this performance Rosler takes on the role of an apron-clad housewife and parodies the television cooking demonstrations popularized by Julia Child in the 1960s. The work is an expression of the frustration at the narrow roles assigned to women.

Rosler has said of this work, "I was concerned with something like the notion of 'language speaking the subject,' and with the transformation of the woman herself into a sign in a system of signs that represent a system of food production, a system of harnessed subjectivity."

© 2021 Martha Rosler. Courtesy Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI), New York.

DISCOVERIES



Wade, Bex

Dancefloors to Demos

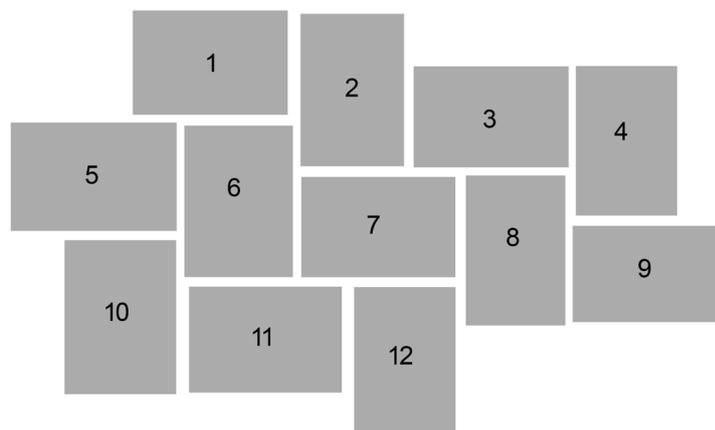
12 photos, each 35 x 50cm

- 1 - 'Click + Drag 3.0', NYC, 2010
- 2 - 'Bloody Mary Halloween', NYC, 2010
- 3 - 'Kill the Bill', London, 2021
- 4 - 'Trans+ Pride', London, 2021
- 5 - 'Taylor Mac', NYC, 2010
- 6 - 'Vandam', NYC, 2011
- 7 - 'Priday', NYC, 2012
- 8 - 'Queers for Palestine', London, 2021
- 9 - 'Greenhouse', NYC, 2011
- 10 - 'GRA Reform Now', London, 2020
- 11 - 'Not One Day More', London, 2017
- 12 - 'London Together Against Trump', London, 2018

Bex Wade is a trans non binary photographer based in London. For several years their work has focused on protests and Pride, expressions of otherness and outrage. Bex documented nightclubs and parties throughout the LGBTQI+ scenes in the UK and New York for over a decade, and sought to archive the culture and community of these much needed spaces.

As these environments have faced an increasing demise forms of expression and gathering have shifted back to the streets. This series of images reveals the ways in which the club and protest scenes are interconnected.

© 2021 Bex Wade, courtesy of the artist



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