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## **Art** Reviews

## Lorraine O'Grady's First Retrospective Is Both Invigorating and Overdue O'Grady's rebellious spirit has roused the mainstream art world for close to 50 years, and her latest exhibition

at the Brooklyn Museum is no exception.

Alexandra M. Thomas March 23, 2021



this exhibition is no exception. Displaying hundreds of artworks from throughout her career, as well as

Lorraine O'Grady: Both/And has set the Brooklyn Museum ablaze with the

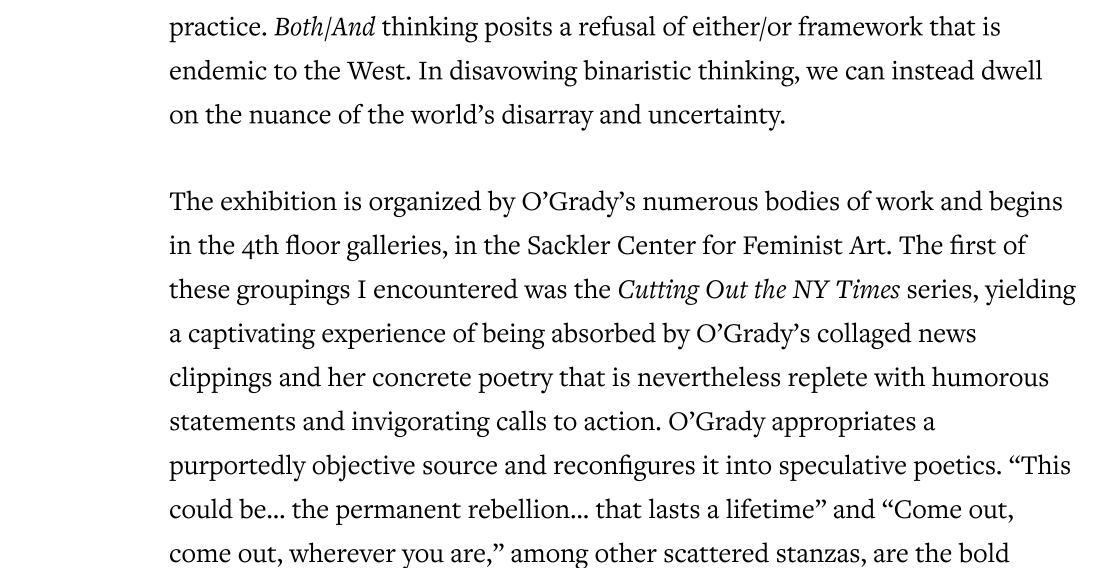
radical gestures and eccentric poetics of an incomparable artist. O'Grady's

rebellious spirit has roused the mainstream art world for close to 50 years, and

archival documents, the show is extraordinarily thorough. This curatorial rigor is in part thanks to O'Grady's own meticulous archival practice and collaboration with curators Aruna D'Souza, Catherine Morris, and Jenée-Daria Strand. These efforts coalesce as an exhibition that historicizes O'Grady as a prodigious figure of the conceptual, feminist, and Black American avant-garde,

while simultaneously encouraging the viewer to enter the artist's world and ponder her radical lessons. ADVERTISEMENT of arts and design ON VIEW NOW





outcomes of experimenting with the written word.

Installation view of Lorraine O'Grady, Cutting Out CONYT (1997/2017), Lorraine O'Grady: Both/And,

The titular focus is the philosophical notion that undergirds O'Grady's

Brooklyn Museum, 2021

Lorraine O'Grady, Art Is . . . (Girl Pointing),

20 x 16 inches, edition of 8 + 1 AP (courtesy

(1983/2009), chromogenic photograph in 40 parts,

Alexander Gray Associates, New York; © Lorraine

upbringing.

O'Grady/Artists Rights Society [ARS], New York)

pleasure, I find myself drawn to the photography. Series such as Art is... are installed in a grid-like fashion, inviting a more linear viewing experience than the scattered collage-poems. A Black girl points through a gold frame as she takes part in the 1983 African American Day Parade in Harlem, where O'Grady brought gold frames and her camera to capture the rapturous delight of Black joy, affirming the artfulness of communal celebration. Though she sometimes works in solitude, O'Grady is an innovator whose work is always grounded in the experiences and

After reading O'Grady's poems with great

aspirations of her community.

her legendary 1980 performance — the white gloved dress of "Mlle Bourgeoise

performing the avatar of a Black beauty queen and demanding that, "BLACK

Noire." In 1980, O'Grady strutted into Just Above Midtown Gallery,

ART MUST TAKE MORE RISKS!" and "NOW IS THE TIME FOR AN

mannequin, now symbolizes O'Grady's radical critique of elitism and

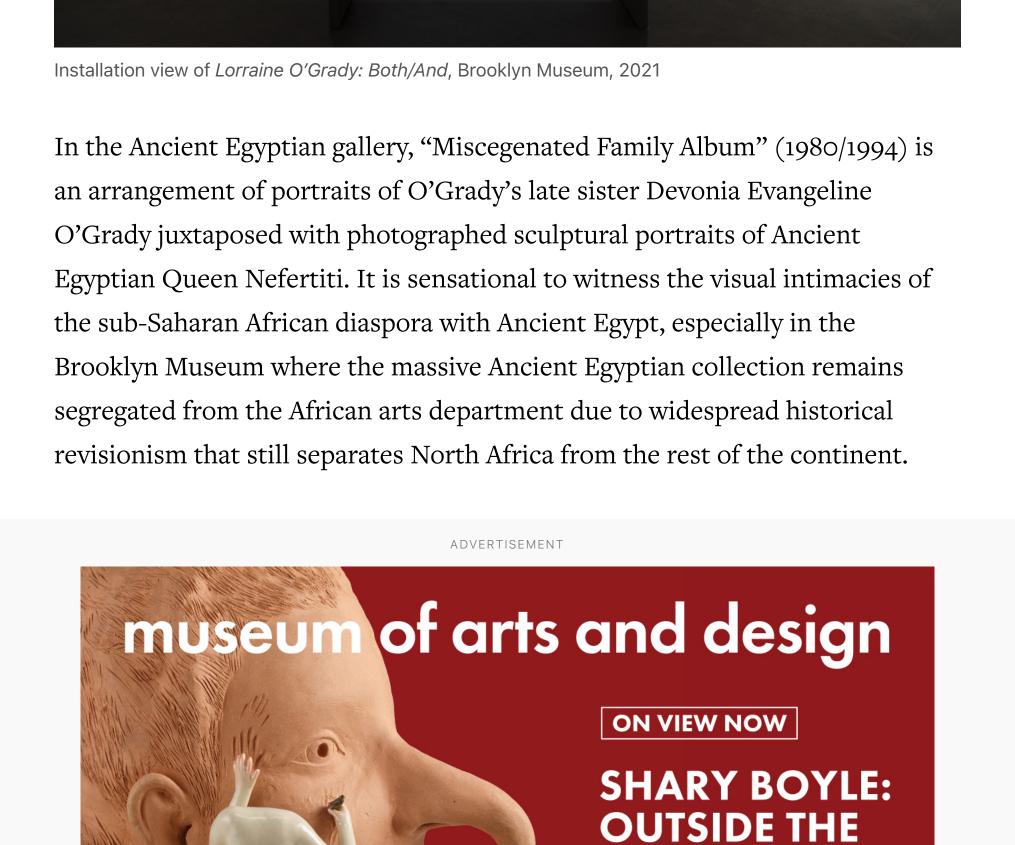
INVASION!" The dress made of white gloves, hanging on a tan-skinned

complicity in the art world, and her own relatively privileged, middle class

Yet, her loyalty and solidarity do not stop her

from placing the Black art world under loving

scrutiny. Mounted on a platform is a relic from



In the American art gallery, a single video, "Landscape (Western Hemisphere)"

(2010-2011) loops a close-up of O'Grady's Black curly hair, nestled between

Frederic Church and Thomas Cole's Manifest Destiny paintings of empty,

Westward expansion/Native American land dispossession. What does it mean

to draw a parallel between Black hair and "unconquered land"? Perhaps it is

the unruliness of nature — roaming mountains and bountiful curls — or the

sense of impending doom, as Black hair is still denigrated and Native American

picturesque landscapes that are ultimately a matter of propaganda for

land and ways of life still dispossessed.

self.

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**Lorraine O'Grady** 

November 9, 2020

PALACE OF ME

and disrupting the eurocentricity of the gallery space. In one photograph she holds a sword horizontally, appearing almost poised to puncture the 19th century Auguste Rodin nude sculpture towering nearby. From "Mlle Bourgeoise Noire" to the Caribbean-inflected medieval knight, O'Grady's performances and self-portraits explore a vast historic, gendered, Lorraine O'Grady, "Mlle Bourgeoise Noire Costume" and racialized range — avowing the fluidity of (1980), costume made from white gloves, shoes, tiara, sash, pair of gloves, overall: 69 1/2 x 22 x 8 subjectivity and adorned presentations of the

Installation view, Lorraine O'Grady, Announcement of a New Persona (2020), Brooklyn Museum, 2021 (photo by Brooklyn Museum, Jonathan Dorado) Lorraine O'Grady: Both/And continues through July 18, 2021 at Brooklyn Museum, (200 Eastern Parkway, Crown Heights, Brooklyn). The exhibition is curated by Catherine Morris, Aruna D'Souza, and Jenée-Daria Strand.

**Literary Brilliance** 

November 16, 2020

Lorraine O'Grady

The Latest New York City Considers the Removal of Statues of **Enslavers** 

Elaine Velie

Murat Cem Mengüç

Brillon (Haida) breathes life into each piece of metal he crafts, conjuring sacred animals and preserving the legends of his people. Daniel Larkin

Sara Raza's limited curatorial vision empowers dictators and diminishes

artists who are making work that has political impact and carries risk.

UCLA's MFA in Media Arts Challenges Conventions

by a student of the Rembrandt School rather than the artist himself.

There's Nothing Punk About Punk Orientalism

Jesse Brillon's Roaring Metalwork

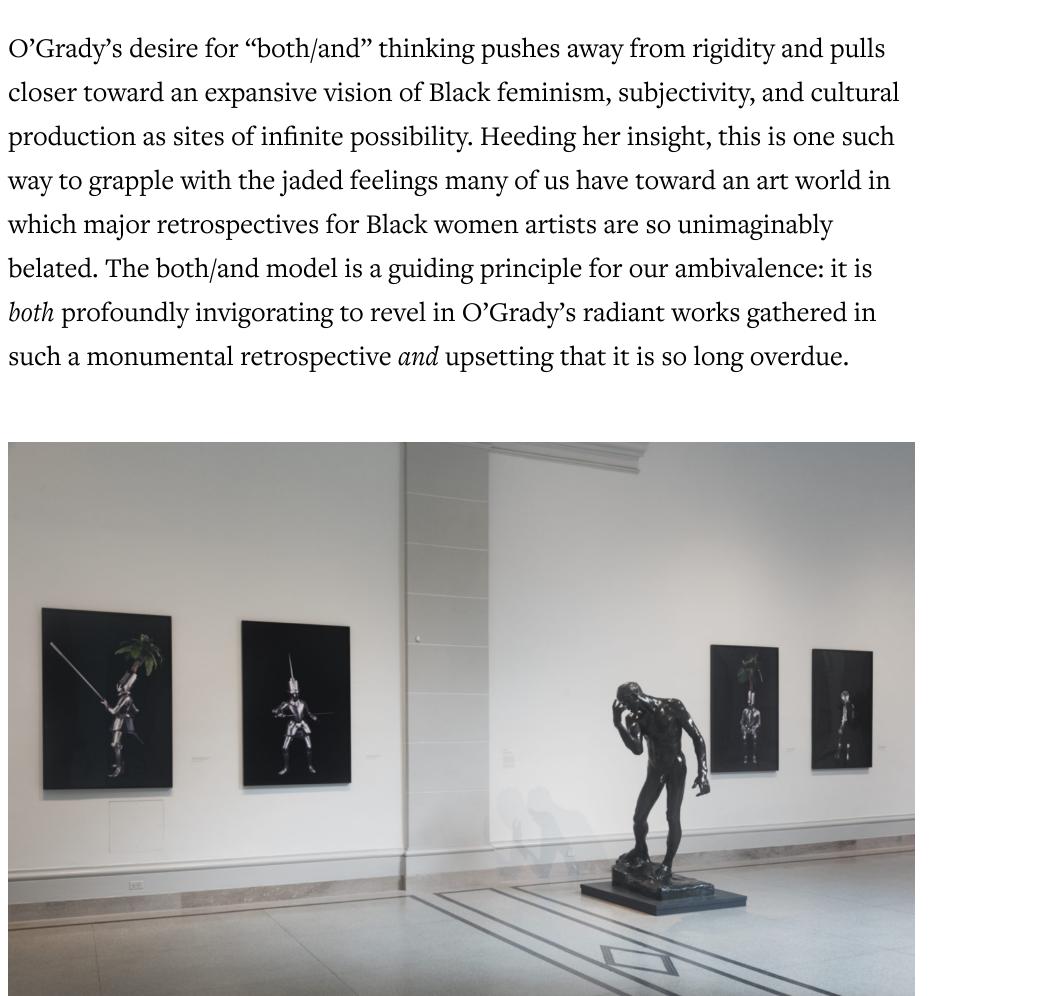
The program provides a rigorous environment for bold experimentation in new modes of critical thinking and art making in the context of media and technology. Previously Misattributed Rembrandt Painting Could Sell for \$18M "The Adoration of the Kings" (c. 1628) was once thought to have been made

Barcelona Museum Gives Censored Art a Permanent Home The new Museu de l'Art Prohibit will house a collection of more than 200 artworks that have been removed, banned, or denounced. Maya Pontone

Teague, Risa Puleo, Yolande Daniels, Andrianna Campbell-LaFleur, and Yuri Suzuki are speaking in this free public series. Bushwick Film Festival Celebrates Its Sweet Sixteen The festival is back starting October 25 with a lineup of over 125 independent

Conservator Rosa Lowinger reflects on her time working at LACMA in the 1980s in an excerpt from her new memoir, Dwell Time.

Yet, the most striking installation is that of O'Grady's recent series, Announcement of a New Persona (2020) in the European art gallery lining the museum's bright and spacious Beaux-Arts Court. Here, we find O'Grady as another avatar, this time a Medieval knight. The artist adorns her European knight costume with a palm tree, presumably alluding to her Caribbean heritage,



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Lorraine O'Grady, in All of Her Lorraine O'Grady Still Won't

New York

Alexandra M. Thomas is a PhD student in History of Art, African American Studies,

interests include: global modern and contemporary... More by Alexandra M. Thomas

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Quick-to-See Smith are among this season's major highlights.

Simone Leigh, Maremi Andreozzi, and a Native art show curated by Jaune

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commemorations of individuals who committed "crimes against humanity."

and Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies at Yale University. Her research

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Reviews

With Communities Presented by the Mural Arts Institute, this national symposium brings together artists and changemakers from across the US to Philadelphia.

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In Art Conservation, There Is No Perfect Solution

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