

Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago presents the first major survey of the work of groundbreaking, multidisciplinary artist Howardena Pindell. The exhibition spans the New York-based artist's five-decades-long career, featuring early figurative paintings, pure abstraction and conceptual works, and personal and political art that emerged in the aftermath of a life-threatening car accident in 1979. The exhibition traces the themes and visual experiments that run throughout Pindell's work up to the present, exemplifying how her artistic development reflects a larger shift from Modernism to contemporary art practices. *Howardena Pindell: What Remains To Be Seen* is co-curated by MCA Curator Naomi Beckwith and Valerie Cassel Oliver, Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, and is on view from February 24 to May 20, 2018.

Trained as a painter, Pindell has challenged the traditional art world and asserted her place in its history as an African-American woman artist. Since the 1970s, she has used unconventional materials such as glitter, talcum powder, and perfume to stretch the boundaries of the rigid custom of the rectangular, canvas painting. She has also infused her work with traces of her labor, such as obsessively affixing dots of pigment and circles made with an ordinary hole punch. Despite the effort exerted in the creation of these paintings, Pindell's use of rich colors and unusual materials gives the finished works a sumptuous and ethereal quality.

The work Pindell has created since 1979 engages the world beyond the painting studio. This shift was precipitated by a series of personal and political catastrophes that Pindell experienced that year, including a car accident that left her with short-term memory loss. Expanding on the experimental formal language she previously developed, Pindell has explored a wide range of subject matters, from the personal and diaristic to the social and political. Her *Autobiography* series transforms postcards from her global travels into photo-based collages, which she used to reconstruct her memories.

Other bodies of work, such as her *Rambo* series, respond to broader cultural concerns and critique sexism, racism, and discrimination at large. The exhibition also highlights Pindell's work with photography, film, and performance, mediums she has used to explore her place in the world. Her chance-based experiments include photographing her drawings juxtaposed over a television screen, as well as creating *Free, White, and 21* (1980), a performance for film based on her personal experiences of racism.

The exhibition also includes Pindell's most recent works from the last two years, which draw on the

beauty and innovation of her approach to abstraction to build upon contemporary conversations around equity and diversity.

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