

Since the mid-1960s, Adrian Piper (American, born 1948) has been a formidable voice in the world of contemporary art. As the artist wrote in 1970, “One reason for making and exhibiting a work is to induce a reaction or change in the viewer.” Over the course of her fifty-year career, Piper has never ceased to do just that, challenging our assumptions about the social structures that shape our world and addressing some of the most urgent and divisive issues of our time, including racism, sexism, and xenophobia.

Part of a generation that, in the 1960s and 1970s, pioneered Conceptual art, in which ideas take precedence over physical objects, Piper has mined its full potential. Using conceptual strategies and a range of mediums, the artist has sought to heighten viewers’ attention to their own thought processes, with particular emphasis on those that—intentionally or not—dismiss and exclude others.

In works informed by her studies in philosophy, for which she earned a doctorate at Harvard in 1981, Piper has posed fundamental questions about morality, trust, and legitimate authority. This thought-provoking and sometimes somber subject matter is suffused with a deep sense of humor and penetrating wit to yield a body of work that is as incisive as it is hopeful.

*This exhibition continues in the Museum’s Atrium, on the second floor.*

Organized by Christophe Cherix, The Robert Lehman Foundation Chief Curator of Drawings and Prints, The Museum of Modern Art; Connie Butler, Chief Curator, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; and David Platzker, former Curator, Department of Drawings and Prints, The Museum of Modern Art; with Tessa Ferreyros, Curatorial Assistant, Department of Drawings and Prints, The Museum of Modern Art.