

P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center
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PS.1 MoMA

EXHIBITION PRESS RELEASE
***NEOHOODOO: ART FOR A
FORGOTTEN FAITH***

October 19 through January 26, 2009. Opening Day Celebration: October 19, 12-6PM

(Long Island City, NY — September 4, 2008) P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center presents *NeoHooDoo: Art for a Forgotten Faith*, an exhibition co-organized by The Menil Collection that brings together a multigenerational group of North, South, and Central American artists who address the value of ritual in the artistic process and the wider implications of spirituality in contemporary art. On view in the 2nd Floor Main Gallery, Project Rooms, and Corner Gallery.

Including some 50 works of sculpture, photography, assemblage, video, performance, and other media, *NeoHooDoo* asserts that the drive towards a spiritual practice is as relevant today in our burgeoning global society as it has ever been. Artists have long engaged with ritualism to enrich their work, drawing on the traditions of shamans, griots, and oral historians. *NeoHooDoo* “grew out of a desire to explore the multiple meanings of spirituality in contemporary art,” states P.S.1 Curatorial Advisor and Menil Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art Franklin Sirmans.

In the late 1960s poet Ishmael Reed adopted the 19th-century term “HooDoo,” referring to forms of religion and their practice in the New World to explore the idea of spiritual practice outside easily definable faiths or creeds and ritualism on contemporary works of literature and art. “Neo-HooDoo,” he writes in his 1972 collection of poetry, *Conjure*, “believes that every man is an artist and every artist a priest.” His seminal poems, “The Neo-HooDoo Manifesto” and “The Neo-HooDoo Aesthetic,” delve even deeper into this artistic practice to demonstrate its vitality as an international, multicultural aesthetic that embraces spiritual creativity and innovation.

From Vancouver to Havana, Guatemala City, and Bahia, the artists in *NeoHooDoo* began using ritualistic practice as a means to recover “lost” spirituality and to reexamine and reinterpret aspects of cultural heritage throughout the late 1970s and early 1980s. Visual artists from across the Americas, such as Jean-Michel Basquiat (1960–1988), José Bedia (b. 1959), Rebecca Belmore (b. 1960), Jimmie Durham (b. 1940), and Ana Mendieta (1948–1985) have freely combined disparate materials and mediums to create spaces where art and audience can interact unhindered by history or societal constraints. For these artists, ritual practice often emerges as a form of catharsis and political critique to approach issues such as race, gender, slavery, and colonization. This exhibition also will look at younger artists such as video artists Michael Joo and Regina José Galindo, who carry on many of these practices and themes decades later, reconfiguring the work of their predecessors into performative displays of ritual through film and gallery installations.

Challenging conceptions of “insider” and “outsider” art, the artists in the exhibition frequently create work using everyday objects that resonate both within the confines of a gallery or museum and among their own localized audiences who may or may not visit art institutions. Situating their work in a vernacular aesthetic, the meaning of the work fluctuates according to its context. Items such as light bulbs, wine bottles, artificial flowers, piano keys are repositioned in assemblages confronting themes of exploitation, genocide, and poverty. The 53 pieces of discarded waste paper comprising Jimmy Durham’s *A Street-level Treatise on Money and Work* are brought to the center of a dialogue on the

destruction of native cultures and Dario Robleto addresses American notions of manifest destiny in *Deep Down I Don't Believe in Hymns* by taking a military-issued blanket and "infesting" it with hand-ground dust made from vinyl recordings of Neil Young's "Cortez the Killer" and Soft Cell's "Tainted Love."

Franklin Sirmans developed *NeoHooDoo* as one of P.S.1's curatorial advisory programs, a unique system that allows diverse curators to present experimental exhibition work. Current curatorial advisors include Chief Curatorial Advisor Klaus Biesenbach, Senior Curatorial Advisor Neville Wakefield, Andrea Bellini, Phong Bui, Lia Gangitano, Susanne Pfeffer, and Franklin Sirmans.

NeoHooDoo: Art for a Forgotten Faith will be accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue featuring texts by Arthur C. Danto, Greg Tate, Robert Farris Thompson, Jen Budney and Julia Herzberg. The catalogue will also include an interview with Ishmael Reed by Franklin Sirmans and a work by renowned poet Quincy Troupe. The fully illustrated, color catalogue will be available for purchase at Artbook @ P.S.1 (144 pp., \$45.00).

Artist List:

Terry Adkins, Janine Antoni, Radcliffe Bailey, José Bedia, Rebecca Belmore, Sanford Biggers, Tania Bruguera, James Lee Byars, María Magdalena Campos-Pons, William Cordova, Jimmie Durham, Regina José Galindo, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, David Hammons, Michael Joo, Brian Jungen, Kcho, Marepe, Ana Mendieta, Amalia Mesa-Bains, Pepón Osorio, Adrian Piper, Ernesto Pujol, Dario Robleto, Betye Saar, Gary Simmons, George Smith, Michael Tracy, Nari Ward

The exhibition is co-organized by The Menil Collection, Houston, Texas, and P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center. It was previously presented at The Menil Collection and will travel to the Miami Art Museum from February 20 until May 24, 2009.

The exhibition is made possible by The Friends of Education of The Museum of Modern Art and with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts, a State Agency.

The accompanying publication is made possible by the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts.

P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center

Background:

P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center is one of the largest and oldest organizations in the United States solely devoted to contemporary art. Established in 1976 by Alanna Heiss, P.S.1 originated from The Institute for Art and Urban Resources, a not-for-profit organization founded five years prior with the mission of turning abandoned, underutilized buildings in New York City into artist studios and exhibition spaces. P.S.1 became an affiliate of The Museum of Modern Art in 2000. In 2004, P.S.1 launched the world's first Internet art radio station, Art Radio WPS1.org, which operates out of the historic Clocktower in Lower Manhattan.

Support:

Operations and programs of P.S.1 are supported by the P.S.1 Board of Directors; the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs; Helen M. Marshall, Queens Borough President; The Council of the City of New York; and public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts, a State Agency. Additional funding is provided by individuals, foundations, and corporate contributions.

Exhibitions at P.S.1 are made possible by the Annual Exhibition Fund with support from Peter Norton and the Peter Norton Family Foundation, Agnes Gund and Daniel Shapiro, Lawton W. Fitt and James I. McLaren Foundation, Kathy and Richard S. Fuld, Jr., Michel Zaleski, Sydnie Lansing, Philip E. and Shelley Fox Aarons, Mimi and Peter Haas Fund, Anna Marie and Robert F. Shapiro, Sheldrake Organization, and David Teiger, with additional funding from Enzo Viscusi, John Comfort, Lewis B. and Dorothy Cullman, E. William Judson, Donald L. Bryant, Dennis W. LaBarre, Clarissa Alcock Bronfman, Ena Swansea, Douglas S. Cramer, Simone Development Companies, *Men's Vogue*, Barneys New York, John V. Cioffi, Heineken USA, and Susan G. Jacoby in honor of Peter Norton and Gwen Adams.

Time Out New York is the official print partner of exhibitions and public programs at P.S.1.

Directions:

P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center is located at 22-25 Jackson Avenue at 46th Avenue in Long Island City, Queens, across the Queensboro Bridge from midtown Manhattan. It is easily accessible by bus and subway. Traveling by subway, visitors should take either the E or V to 23 Street-Ely Avenue (note that the V does not run on weekends); the 7 to 45 Road-Courthouse Square; or the G to Court Square or 21 Street-Van Alst. Visitors may also take the Q67 bus to Jackson and 46th Avenues or the B61 to Jackson Avenue.

Hours:

P.S.1 is open from 12:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., Thursday through Monday. It is closed on Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years Day.

- artbook@PS1 is open from 1:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., Thursday through Sunday.
- LeRosier Café is open from 12:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., Thursday through Monday.

Admission:

Admission is a \$5.00 suggested donation; \$2.00 for students and senior citizens; free for MoMA members and MoMA admission ticket holders. The MoMA ticket must be presented at P.S.1 within thirty days of date on ticket and is not valid during Warm Up or other P.S.1 events or benefits.

Web Sites:

www.ps1.org • www.wps1.org • www.moma.org

Contact:

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