

MoMA PS1 PRESENTS MAJOR EXHIBITION OF ARTIST VAGINAL DAVIS OPENING OCTOBER 9

LONG ISLAND CITY, New York, June 25, 2025—This fall, MoMA PS1 will present a major exhibition of Vaginal Davis, spanning five decades of her practice as a performer, visual artist, author, filmmaker, musician, educator, self-proclaimed “Blacktress,” and countercultural icon. Originating at the Moderna Museet in Stockholm, *Vaginal Davis: Magnificent Product* makes its US debut at PS1, opening October 9, 2025. Organized thematically, the exhibition includes major installations, video, paintings, zines, audio works, sculptures, and cross-disciplinary collaborations, as well as extensive archival materials. The presentation spotlights Ms. Davis’s role as an underground trailblazer in the overlapping realms of art, music, performance, and queer politics—as well as her uncompromising glamour.

An archival display focused on her early career in her hometown, Los Angeles, traces the tributaries of her early career in the 1980s and ‘90s. A founding mother of the city’s queercore scene, Ms. Davis was, in her own words, “too gay for the punk scene and too punk for the gays.” Early videos, photographs, and ephemera detail her critical position at this nexus of the punk and queer worlds, highlighting her bands—¡Cholita! The Female Menudo; black fag; Pedro, Muriel, & Esther (PME); and the Afro Sisters, whose 1984 unreleased album gives the exhibition its title—as well as performances, photoshoots, and club nights. In a dedicated cinema room, films such as *That Fertile Feeling* (1983) and *The White to Be Angry* (1999) demonstrate Ms. Davis’s embodied pastiche of social mores and horrors, exposing cracks in the myth of a singular identity.

Ms. Davis’s time in Los Angeles reappears in the installation *HAG – small, contemporary, haggard* (2012), a tribute to the eponymous gallery she ran out of her Sunset Boulevard apartment from 1982 to 1989. During its run, HAG Gallery featured the work of creatives such as actor John Drew Barrymore (who lived next door), designer Rick Owens, and vocalist Alice Bag, among many others. First realized in 2012 at PARTICIPANT INC. in New York, *HAG* recreates the footprint of the original Los Angeles gallery in the form of an Ames room, whose torqued architecture distorts the scale of viewers who enter it—rendering the small large and vice versa. Papered with a “lesbian domesticity” wallpaper, it houses sculptures made of bread baked in the likenesses of Mariah Carey and Justin Timberlake, as well as a series of portraits painted using discount makeup. Elsewhere, the exhibition brings together a broader selection of Ms. Davis’s paintings from the early 1990s through 2022, which, evocative of religious icon paintings, and painted with discontinued cosmetics, celebrate grande dames from courtesan Madame du Barry to actress Lillian Gish—“women trapped in the bodies of women,” as Ms. Davis notes. This selection also features three of Ms. Davis’s largest paintings to date, all from the collection of The Museum of Modern Art, exalting deities such as *Oshun, African Goddess of Love and Sweet Water* (2021).

The installation *HOPPFISTEREI* offers visitors the chance to explore a vast collection of Ms. Davis’s writing, including her iconoclastic zines filled with poetry, pornography, and LA gossip; the columns she penned for the *LA Weekly*; her ongoing blog “Speaking From the Diaphragm”; and works of self-published fiction. The installation highlights further channels through which Ms. Davis’s distinct voice circulated, such as audio works, “video zines,” and footage of live readings. As an active archive with a working photocopy machine, *HOPPFISTEREI* allows visitors to copy, compile, and collage their own editorial projects to take home with them.

The work *The Wicked Pavilion* (2021) comprises two installations: *The Fantasia Library* and *The Tween Bedroom*, which allow visitors to delve further into lineages of artistic influence and the political potency of

desire. The “tween bedroom” is replete with a vanity, magazine clippings of crushes, movie posters, and an oversized papier-mâché phallus on a rotating bed. *The Fantasia Library* holds five hundred pink books that Ms. Davis has started writing but “never quite finished,” or aspires to write, with titles like “Semi Detached Bungalow” and “The Fiscal Clit.” It also features a selection of titles influential to Ms. Davis, from Kathy Acker’s novel *Empire of the Senseless* (1988) to Liz Renay’s self-help classic *How to Attract Men* (1966).

Central to *Magnificent Product* are Ms. Davis’s enduring collaborations with influential artists and collectives in the United States and abroad. *Naked on my Ozgoat — Anal Deep Throat* (2024–25) is a new multimedia installation made in collaboration with New York-based artist Jonathan Berger that materializes Ms. Davis’s life-long love for L. Frank Baum’s Oz books through sculpture, sound, and prints made directly on the museum’s walls. The installation recalls her first art exhibition—an earlier reimagining of Baum’s children’s novels—at the Pio Pico Library in Los Angeles at age eight.

In 2005, Ms. Davis relocated from Los Angeles to Berlin. Shortly prior to her move, she had begun collaborating with the Berlin-based artist collective CHEAP. Founded by Susanne Sachsse, Marc Siegel, and Daniel Hendrickson in 2001, the group creates performances, videos, installations, and other discursive forms that combine theory and pleasure, politics and whimsy, aesthetics and sex. The sound, object, and moving image installation *Choose Mutation, with Photographs by Annette Frick* (2024), presented in PS1’s double-height gallery, features a dystopian video about paranoia and the resonance of political control over the body, projected onto a motorized billboard. The work, conceived by Susanne Sachsse, Marc Siegel, and Martin Siemann, also includes a series of black-and-white photographs by Annette Frick depicting the CHEAP collective members in early performances.

On Saturday, October 11, 2025, at 4 p.m., New York City-based shock-rock band The Voluptuous Horror of Karen Black, co-founded by Kembra Pfahler and Samoa Moriki, will return to MoMA PS1 for an Open House performance in celebration of their friend and fellow punk icon Vaginal Davis.

On Monday, October 13, 2025, at 7 p.m., The Museum of Modern Art will host An Evening with Vaginal Davis, as part of Modern Mondays. The event features a screening of videos from across nearly four decades of her practice, followed by a conversation moderated by Stuart Comer, Lonti Ebers Chief Curator of Media and Performance, MoMA.

Vaginal Davis: Magnificent Product marks the first career-spanning institutional exhibition of Ms. Davis’s work in the United States. Originally exhibited across six venues in Stockholm, the PS1 iteration showcases the full breadth of her expansive, unruly, and ever-relevant practice under one roof.

Vaginal Davis: Magnificent Product is accompanied by a major publication, comprising commissioned essays by authors including Hendrik Folkerts, Lia Gangitano, Bojana Kunst, Elisabeth Lebovici, and Troizel. The catalogue also includes twenty letters to Vaginal Davis from former collaborators, friends, and co-conspirators, including Jonathan Berger, Darby English, Sheldon Gooch, Lisa Teasley, Wu Tsang, and band members of Xiu Xiu, among many others.

The exhibition is organized by Hendrik Folkerts, Curator of International Contemporary Art and Head of Exhibitions, Moderna Museet, Stockholm. The chapters at partner institutions were organized in collaboration with Eva-Lena Bergström (Nationalmuseum), Anna Efraimsson (MDT), Richard Julin and

Therese Kellner (Accelerator), Marti Manen and Isabella Tjäder (Index – The Swedish Contemporary Art Foundation), and Cecilia Widenheim (Tensta Konsthall).

The presentation at MoMA PS1 is organized by Jody Graf, Associate Curator, and Sheldon Gooch, Curatorial Assistant.

SUPPORT

Support is provided by Philip Aarons and Shelley Fox Aarons.

EXHIBITION TOUR

Moderna Museet, Stockholm, May 18, 2024–October 13, 2024

Gropius Bau, Berlin, March 21, 2025– September 13, 2025

MoMA PS1 New York, October 9, 2025–March 2, 2026

ABOUT MoMA PS1

MoMA PS1 champions art and artists at the intersection of the social, cultural, and political issues of our time. Providing audiences with the agency to ask questions, access to knowledge, and a forum for public debate, PS1 has offered insight into artists' diverse worldviews for more than 40 years. Founded in 1976, the institution was a defining force in the alternative space movement in New York City, transforming a 19-century public schoolhouse in Long Island City into a site for artistic experimentation and creativity. PS1 has been a member of New York City's Cultural Institutions Group (CIG) since 1982 and affiliated with The Museum of Modern Art since 2000.

Hours: MoMA PS1 is open from 12 to 6 p.m. Thursday, Friday, Sunday, and Monday, and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturdays. Closed on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day.

Admission: \$10 suggested admission; \$5 for students and senior citizens; free for New York State residents and MoMA members. Free admission for New York State residents is made possible by The Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation. Tickets may be reserved online at mo.ma/ps1tickets.

Visitor Guide: Discover even more from MoMA PS1 with the Bloomberg Connects app. Read wall text, hear directly from artists, and uncover the building's history with this multimedia visitor guide. This digital experience is made possible through the support of Bloomberg Philanthropies.

Directions: MoMA PS1 is located at 22-25 Jackson Avenue at 46th Ave in Long Island City, Queens, across the Queensboro Bridge from midtown Manhattan. Traveling by subway, take the E, M, or 7 to Court Sq; or the G to Court Sq or 21 St Van Alst. By bus, take the Q67 to Jackson and 46th Ave or the B62 to 46th Ave.

Information: For general inquiries, call (718) 784-2084 or visit moma.org/ps1.

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