

MEDIA ALERT

Weinberg/Newton Gallery

EXHIBITION

Bold Disobedience

EXHIBITION DATES

June 23 –
September 2, 2017

OPENING RECEPTION

Friday, June 23, 2017,
5–8 PM

LOCATION

Weinberg/Newton Gallery
300 W Superior Street, Suite 203
Chicago, IL 60654

HOURS

Mon – Sat 10 AM – 5 PM

VISIT US ONLINE

weinbergnewtongallery.com

ALL MEDIA REQUESTS

Please contact
Claire Arctander
312 529 5090
craig@d-weinberg.com

High-resolution images of artwork are available upon request.

OVERVIEW

Bold Disobedience is a group exhibition presented in collaboration with Mikva Challenge. Selected by a council of twelve student curators, this collection of works demonstrates myriad social issues that matter to youths today. The exhibition comprises works by local professional artists as well as student artists from the Chicago High School for the Arts. These artworks grapple with the issues that our team of student curators have deemed most critical in our conflicted contemporary culture, promoting racial justice, economic equity, and queer rights. The student curators have directed every aspect of this exhibition, from research to conceptualization to installation.

STUDENT CURATORS' STATEMENT, IN THEIR WORDS

2017 ushered a continued era of resistance, as unethical governmental issues and pre-judged biases are increasingly normalized in our everyday lives. Unable to participate in the electoral process, the youth engage in civic action and respond by doing everything in our power to make our voices heard. Young people have always defied injustice and now, more than ever, we are making clear what we stand for.

ARTISTS

featuring Angela Davis Fegan, Jaclyn Jacunski, Kuumba Lynx, Yvette Mayorga, Cheryl Pope, Sarah Ross, and Dread Scott

PARTNERS

Mikva Challenge develops youth to be informed, empowered, and active citizens and community leaders. They do this by engaging youth in action civics, an authentic and transformative learning process built on youth voice and youth expertise.

ABOUT WEINBERG/NEWTON GALLERY

Weinberg/Newton Gallery is an exhibition space with a mission to educate and inform the public on social justice issues. Through artwork and programming, the gallery provides an engaging environment for discourse on critical contemporary issues facing our communities. Connecting artists with social justice organizations, the gallery works to drive change and cultivate a culture of consciousness.

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Bold Disobedience is a group exhibition presented in collaboration with Mikva Challenge. Selected by a council of twelve student curators, this collection of works demonstrates myriad social issues that matter to youths today. The exhibition comprises works by established Chicago-based artists Angela Davis Fegan, Jaclyn Jacunski, artist collective Kuumba Lynx, Yvette Mayorga, Cheryl Pope, Sarah Ross, and Dread Scott as well as emerging artists who currently attend the Chicago High School for the Arts, Thalia Agosto, Natalie Aparicio, Evan Calabrese, Maya Halko, Josue Herrera, Zachary Huff, and Raven Smith. For more information about these student artists, please contact claire@d-weinberg.com.

These artworks parse the politics of place and identity. They foreground varied ways that art can function as resistance. They grapple with the issues that our team of student curators have deemed most critical in our conflicted contemporary culture, promoting racial justice, economic equity, and queer rights. In the students' own words:

2017 ushered a continued era of resistance, as unethical governmental issues and pre-judged biases are increasingly normalized in our everyday lives. Unable to participate in the electoral process, the youth engage in civic action and respond by doing everything in our power to make our voices heard. Young people have always defied injustice and now, more than ever, we are making clear what we stand for.

As the exhibition title that the students chose, *Bold Disobedience*, wryly hints at – to obey today is to do nothing, to comply, to float along on the current of the status quo, to let digitally delivered distractions wash over us until we can no longer discern the motivating machinations behind them. Instead, *Bold Disobedience* is a call to participate in civic action, to identify and speak out against injustices, and to disrupt the systems that so deeply impact lived experiences. Within such a beautiful sense of efficacy amongst young people lies the promise of a more sustainable future.

The student curators have directed every aspect of *Bold Disobedience*, from research to conceptualization to installation. Their approach to curation has been in keeping with the methodology of Mikva Challenge, Weinberg/Newton Gallery's partner in presenting this exhibition. Mikva Challenge's programs engage young people in action civics, a process through which they gain the fluency, confidence, and verve to become life-long active citizens. The mission of Mikva Challenge revolves around a core understanding that youths are experts on their own lives and can share that expertise to great effect. Mikva Challenge students serve on councils that advise the mayor's

office, the public schools, and the Chicago Housing Authority among other agencies. Our student curators applied the same principles and skills they use in these interventions to the development of *Bold Disobedience*.

Accordingly, the work on view reflects the youths' acute understanding of the interrelated nature of injustices in our culture, including the reach of racial inequity. Dread Scott's video installation, *Stop*, presents life-sized depictions of young black men from both Brooklyn and Liverpool repeatedly stating how many times they have been stopped by the police. *Stop* conveys the men's extraordinary perseverance in the face of relentless harassment by the powers that be. Kuumba Lynx, a group that identifies itself as an urban arts youth development organization, involves participants from age 8 to 25 in projects pulling from the history and vocabulary of hip hop. These projects encourage young people of color to critically examine their surroundings and to advocate for a more just iteration of them.

The activist printmaking practice of Angela Davis Fegan promotes the transgression of boundaries by another community – LGBTQ people. Her hand typeset posters demand a more nuanced queer visibility. She often presents her posters in public bathrooms, the perversely contested site of the trans liberation movement today. She adopts the moniker *The Lavender Menace* to align her work with the history of radical lesbian activists in the 1970s and to extend their critique to the arguably narrow, assimilationist goals of some gay rights groups now.

Yvette Mayorga's installations impose a visual vocabulary of confectionary adornment upon structures that conjure walls and piles of bricks. These combinations refer to the experience of building community in America amongst Mexican immigrants – and the persistent reinforcement of boundaries and borders that challenge these efforts. Her work poses sugary excess and the game *Candy Land* as fraught metaphors for the migration experience under conditions of white hegemony in the US. In a related manner, Jaclyn Jacunski considers dimensions

of race, class, and community through her maze- and wall-like installations. She employs fencing materials typically found surrounding construction sites in order to evoke the dynamics of gentrification in blighted city neighborhoods. Jacunski's practice also encompasses printmaking, and she produces zines to accompany her installations in which she traces connections between current events pertaining to social justice.

Another artist who explores the intersections of class, access, and activism, Sarah Ross examines social ecologies with her often large-scale and collaborative projects. For *Bold Disobedience*, our student curators have chosen to highlight Ross's work with the Prison + Neighborhood Art Project, which brings teaching artists and men incarcerated at Stateville Maximum Security Prison together to complete projects that speak to the parallel systemic oppressions that take place inside and outside of prison.

Finally, the practice of Cheryl Pope exemplifies the very ethos of this exhibition. Pope works with members of her community here in Chicago, often youths, to respond to the injustices that impact their lives. Her works often formally refer to the trappings of scholastic experience – classroom desks, varsity banners, school gyms – to convey explorations of identity in the spirit of coming-of-age, collaboration, mentorship, and liberation.

Weinberg/Newton Gallery is thrilled to bring work by these politically-engaged artists into conversation with that of students at the Chicago High School for the Arts. In the spirit of Mikva Challenge's motto – *democracy is a verb* – *Bold Disobedience* displays expressions of dissent by artists both above and below the watermark of age eighteen to represent the ways that all people can participate in a democracy, can destabilize structures of oppression – can productively disobey.

LOCATION

Unless noted, events take place
at Weinberg/Newton Gallery
300 W Superior Street, Suite 203
Chicago, IL 60654

All events are free and open to
the public.

The gallery may be reached at
312 529 5090 or info@weinbergnewtongallery.com

Bold Disobedience

OPENING RECEPTION

FRIDAY, JUNE 23, 5–8 PM

CHICAGO ARCHITECTURE FOUNDATION EVENT

THURSDAY, JULY 20, TIME TBD

PANEL DISCUSSION: IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT FOR ADOLESCENTS

THURSDAY, AUGUST 3, TIME TBD

MORE PROGRAMMING DETAILS TO COME.



ANGELA DAVIS FEGAN is a native of Chicago's South Side. She originated her ongoing *Lavender Menace* poster project in 2015. A graduate of Chicago's famed Whitney Young High School, she received her BFA in Fine Arts from New York's Parson's School of Design and her MFA in Interdisciplinary Book and Paper Arts from Columbia College Chicago. Fegan has mounted shows in Chicago at the University of Illinois at Chicago's Montgomery Ward Gallery, Galerie F, Chicago Artists' Coalition, the DePaul Art Museum, and the Hyde Park Art Center, and at the Center for Book Arts (New York). Her work has been selected for book covers including *How to Seduce a White Boy in Ten Easy Steps* by Laura Yes Yes, *The Truth About Dolls* by Jamila Woods, *Secondhand* by Maya Marshall, *Where Brooklyn At* by Roger Bonair-Agard and the upcoming *All Blue So Late* by Laura Swearingen—

Steadwell. Her work has been written about in *The Offing* (LA Review of Books), *Hyperallergic*, *Chicago Magazine*, the *RedEye* and the *Chicago Reader*.

IMAGE: ANGELA DAVIS FEGAN, LAVENDER MENACE POSTER PROJECT, INSTALLATION VIEW, 2016



JACLYN JACUNSKI is a Chicago-based artist and has recently completed the BOLT Residency at the Chicago Artists Coalition. Her works takes on various formats, from printmaking to installation to sculpture, and deals with themes of community and its boundaries. Her practice draws inspiration from protests and acts of resistance in local communities. Jacunski has an MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and a BFA from the University of Wisconsin, Madison and has taught at SAIC and Harrington College of Design. She worked for many years as an assistant to the master printers at Tandem Press in Madison. She currently works at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago at the Earl and Brenda Shapiro Center for Research and Collaboration, promoting artist-led research and culture. She has shown work in Chicago at Lillstreet Art Center, Spudnik Press,

Ukrainian Institute of Modern Art, The Franklin, Comfort Station, and Hyde Park Art Center.

IMAGE: JACLYN JACUNSKI, *START TOGETHER*,
INSTALLATION VIEW, 2016



KUUMBA LYNX is an urban arts youth development organization founded in 1996 by three women: Jaquanda Villegas, Leida Garcia-Mukwacha, and Jacinda Bullie. For two decades, alongside many of Chicago's artists, activists, educators, and youth communities, Kuumba Lynx has honed an arts-making practice that presents, preserves, and promotes hip hop as a tool to reimagine and demonstrate a more just world. Kuumba Lynx creates performances and productions, film screenings, artmaking workshops and residencies, youth artist apprenticeships, community cultural events and praxi sharing, all rooted in an indigenous culture of urban artistry and activism. Annually, Kuumba Lynx's Hip Hop Arts Programs support and create opportunities for over 1,000 participants. The Hip Hop Arts Program incorporates ritual, writing, freestyle, dance, beatbox, spoken word, music production,

DJing, graffiti art, photography, video and more. Facilitating programs in Uptown, Little Village, and Austin among other Chicago communities, Kuumba Lynx works with young people ages 8–25 years old.

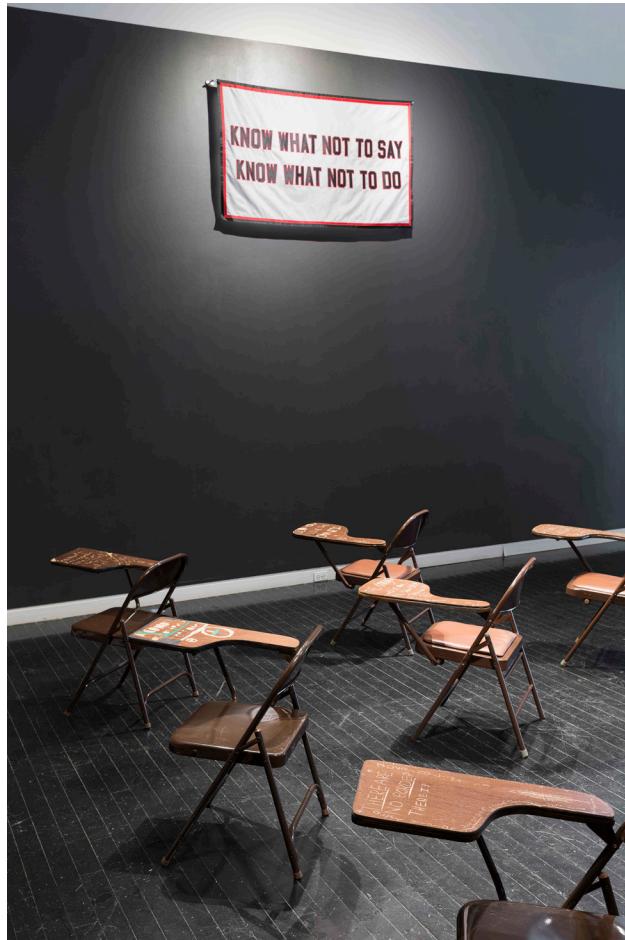
IMAGE: KUUMBA LYNX'S CHICAGO TEEN HIP HOP THEATER ENSEMBLE, 2016



YVETTE MAYORGA is an interdisciplinary artist and educator. She uses confection, industrial materials, and the American board game *Candy Land* as a conceptual framework to juxtapose the borderlands of the U.S. and Mexico. The spaces in the “Candy Lands” of her work relate to immigrant utopian visions of the American Dream. The smell, decoration, and personal photographs in work serve to critique the glut of violence at the border. Mayorga has presented her work at the Vincent Price Art Museum (Los Angeles), the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, EXPO (Chicago), the National Museum of Mexican Art (Chicago), and Grand Valley State University (Allendale, MI). Mayorga has forthcoming Chicago-based exhibitions at Gallery 400, The Arts Incubator, and Roots and Culture. She received her MFA in Fiber and Material Studies from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Her work has been featured in *The Guardian*, the *Chicago Latino ArTchive* of the Inter-University Program for Latino Research, *Art News*, and *REMEZCLA*.

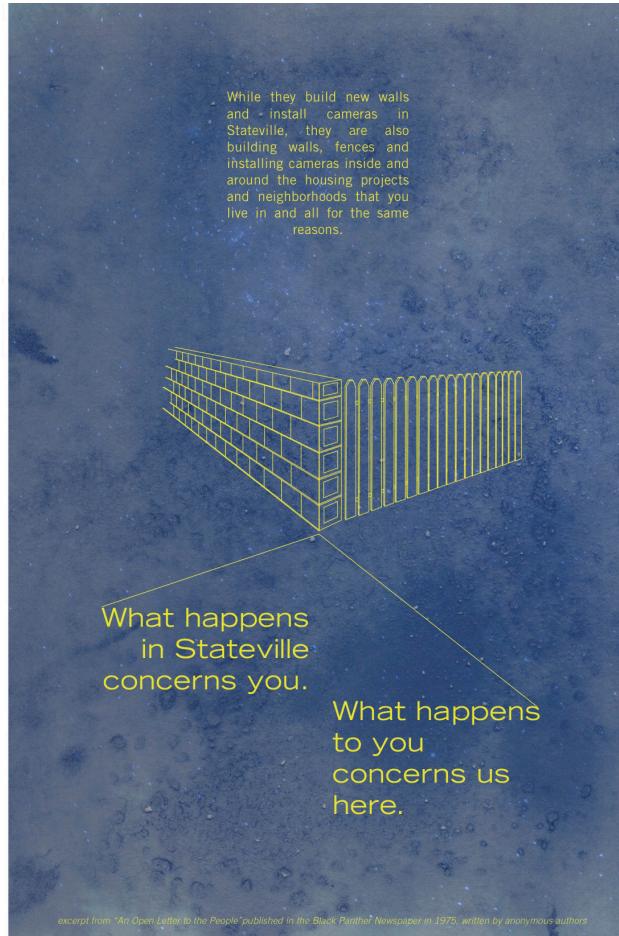
IMAGE: YVETTE MAYORGA, *REALLY SAFE IN AMERICA*, INSTALLATION VIEW, 2016



CHERYL POPE is a visual artist focused in sculpture, installation, and performance. Her work questions and responds to issues of identity as it relates to the individual and the community, specifically in regards to race, gender, class, history, power and place. Her practice emerges from the act and politics of listening. Pope received her BFA and MD from the School of the Art Institute Chicago, where she is now a full time Professor in the Fashion Department. She is represented by Monique Meloche Gallery in Chicago and Galleria Bianconi in Milan. Pope studied under the artist Nick Cave for 12 years, was a teaching artist at the Museum of Contemporary Art for 7 years, and worked in multiple community based organizations throughout Chicago since 2003. After winning the Chicago Golden Gloves Boxing Tournament in 2014, Pope continues to train and teach boxing to youth.

in communities and adults at SOHO House Chicago.

IMAGE: CHERYL POPE, WALK WITH ME 3,
INSTALLATION VIEW, 2016



SARAH ROSS is an artist who works in sculpture, video and photo. Her projects use narrative and the body to address spatial concerns as they relate to access, class, anxiety and activism. Sarah also works collaboratively with other artists on projects such as Compass (of the Midwest Radical Cultural Corridor), Regional Relationships, Chicago Justice Torture Memorials, and Prison and Neighborhood Arts Project. She has co-curated exhibitions at SPACES Gallery (Cleveland), Sea and Space Explorations (Los Angeles) and PS122 (New York). She teaches at The School of the Art Institute Chicago and is a co-organizer of the Prison + Neighborhood Arts Project, an arts and humanities initiative at Stateville Prison. Ross is the recipient of grants from the Propeller Fund, Graham Foundation, University of California Institute for Research in the Arts and the Illinois Art Council. Her work has

been exhibited in venues such as the Armory (Pasadena), Gallery 727 (Los Angeles), PS122 (New York), Roots and Culture Gallery (Chicago), Pinkard Gallery, (Baltimore), META Cultural Foundation (Romania) and the Canadian Center for Architecture (Montreal).

IMAGE: SARAH ROSS, EXCERPT FROM "AN OPEN LETTER TO THE PEOPLE," PRINT, 2017



DREAD SCOTT first received national attention in 1989 when his art became the center of controversy over its use of the American flag while he was a student at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. President G.H.W. Bush called his art “disgraceful” and the entire US Senate denounced and outlawed this work. His work has been included in recent exhibitions at MoMA PS1 (New York), the Walker Art Center (Minneapolis), the Brooklyn Museum and the Whitney Museum of American Art (New York). In 2012, the Brooklyn Academy of Music presented his performance *Dread Scott: Decision* as part of their 30th Anniversary Next Wave Festival. His work is in the collections of the Whitney Museum and the Akron Art Museum. Scott is a recipient of grants from the Creative Capital Foundation, the MAP Fund and the Pollock Krasner Foundation. He works in a range of media

including performance, photography, screen-printing and video. Scott plays with fire — metaphorically and sometimes literally — as when he burned \$171 on Wall Street and encouraged those with money to burn to add theirs to the pyre.

IMAGE: DREAD SCOTT, *STOP*,
INSTALLATION VIEW, 2012

Mikva Challenge was founded on the premise that youth voice and participation matter, and that our civic and political life will be stronger when youth participate and help shape their own destinies. Our three main program areas – Youth Policy Making, Electoral Engagement and Community Problem Solving – involve young people in civic engagement through a hands-on, project-based learning approach called Action Civics, a process that deeply transforms students' civic attitudes, skills, and sense of agency.

Youth, especially youth of color, are experts on the issues and matters that impact them deeply in their everyday lives. From what they're learning in schools to issues of community safety, their experiences as young Chicagoans position them to develop and advocate for solutions necessary to creating meaningful change. At Mikva Challenge, we invite youth to be at the decision-making table with political and community leaders, and empower them to find their voice and take action on issues they feel passionately about.

We're extremely grateful to the Weinberg/Newton Gallery for being champions of youth voice and providing Mikva Challenge youth with the opportunity to curate this exhibit. We are excited to share how Chicago youth are leaders in their community and deeply invested in making their schools and communities vibrant, healthy, and safe.

Democracy is a verb.

Michelle Morales
CEO, Mikva Challenge

Mikva
Challenge

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