

GUGGENHEIM

PRESS RELEASE

The Guggenheim Museum Presents *Going Dark: The Contemporary Figure at the Edge of Visibility*

The large-scale exhibition features a multigenerational, multiracial group of artists who address pressing questions around what it means to be seen, not seen, or erased in society, through formal experimentations with the figure.

Exhibition: *Going Dark: The Contemporary Figure at the Edge of Visibility*

Venue: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1071 Fifth Avenue, New York

Location: Rotunda

Date: October 20, 2023–April 7, 2024

(NEW YORK, NY—October 20, 2023) The Guggenheim Museum presents *Going Dark: The Contemporary Figure at the Edge of Visibility*, a major exhibition predicated on a duality: works of art that present the figure, yet obscure it in some way, thus existing at the “edge of visibility.” The exhibition asserts that these experimentations in figuration across media—painting, photography, drawing, prints, sculpture, video, and installation—articulate pressing questions around what it means to be seen, not seen, or erased in society. On view from October 20, 2023, through April 7, 2024, the exhibition features 28 artists and fills all six ramps of the museum’s Frank Lloyd Wright–designed rotunda.

The artists in this exhibition “go dark” through a range of formal moves, including, but not limited to, literal darkening by way of shadowing or other lighting techniques; paint selections; reversing or otherwise concealing the body; and post-production tools like “chroma-keying.” *Going Dark* suggests that these approaches to the figure allow for engagement with urgent and ongoing discussions around visibility in its *social* context: both invisibility and hypervisibility within public and private spaces, as well as within institutions, (art) history, popular media, social media, and more. Through revealing and concealing the body, *Going Dark* probes a key point of conflict in representation: both the desire to be seen and the desire for obscurity, especially as technology offers more opportunities for (and dangers in) exposure than ever before.

Going Dark features over 100 works of art by a multigenerational, multiracial group of artists, the majority of whom are Black and more than half of whom are women. Chronologically, the show proceeds from the mid-1980s, with paintings and photographs by Kerry James Marshall, Lorna Simpson,

and Ming Smith, through to the present, with photography, sculpture and video works by Sandra Mujinga, Sondra Perry, Stephanie Syjuco, and others. Works from the late 1960s to early 1970s by David Hammons, Faith Ringgold, and Charles White offer earlier reference points for the contemporary history this show presents. Tiona Nekkia McClodden and WangShui debut new paintings, and American Artist presents a new site-specific installation.

While focused on the social contexts of visibility, *Going Dark* also argues that this “semi-visible” figuration as a genre is one of art historical significance, intervening upon discourses of modernism and the monochrome. The works in the show move fluidly between figuration and abstraction, thus blurring the lines in that staid binary frame. Recognizing that making art at the limits of the visible requires new materials, tools, and processes, many of the artists featured in *Going Dark* inventively manipulate color and light to obscure both social and optical perception, challenging the very biology of how we see.

A robust catalogue has been published alongside the exhibition featuring newly commissioned essays by curators and scholars Jordan Carter, Ayanna Dozier, Ashley James, Key Jo Lee, Abbe Schriber, and Legacy Russell. Also included are creative responses to the concept of “going dark” by seven poets and graphic designers: Rio Cortez, Harmony Holiday, Marwa Helal, Kristian Henson, Nontsikelelo Mutiti, and Hassan Rahim, and Kevin Young. The book is designed by Fahad AlHunaif.

Artist List

American Artist	Sandra Mujinga
Kevin Beasley	Chris Ofili
Rebecca Belmore	Sondra Perry
Dawoud Bey	Farah Al Qasimi
John Edmonds	Faith Ringgold
Ellen Gallagher	Doris Salcedo
David Hammons	Lorna Simpson
Lyle Ashton Harris	Ming Smith
Tomashi Jackson	Sable Elyse Smith
Titus Kaphar	Stephanie Syjuco
Glenn Ligon	Hank Willis Thomas
Kerry James Marshall	WangShui
Tiona Nekkia McClodden	Carrie Mae Weems
Joiri Minaya	Charles White

Going Dark: The Contemporary Figure at the Edge of Visibility is organized by Ashley James, Associate Curator, Contemporary Art, with Faith Hunter, Curatorial Assistant.

Events

Several programs will be presented in the museum on the occasion of *Going Dark: The Contemporary Figure at the Edge of Visibility* beginning in early 2024. Event details are subject to change. Please visit guggenheim.org/calendar for more information.

Thirty-Fourth Annual Hilla Rebay Lecture: Dr. Simone Browne

January 9, 2024, 6:30pm | Free with RSVP

Dr. Simone Browne, Associate Professor in the Department of African and African Diaspora Studies at the University of Texas at Austin will deliver the upcoming Hilla Rebay Lecture—which brings distinguished scholars to the Guggenheim Museum to examine significant issues in the theory, criticism, and history of art.

Going Dark: Symposium

Date to be announced, 1-6pm | Tickets: \$30 general, \$25 members, \$20 students

Exhibition artists will gather for a discursive exploration of themes and topics drawn from *Going Dark* and will engage in a series of panel discussions around their work and practice. The program will conclude with an exhibition viewing.

Works & Process Underground Uptown Dance Festival: Kayla Farrish's *Put Away the Fire, dear* (in process)

January 10, 7:30 pm | Tickets: \$55, \$45, \$35, and Choose-What-You-Pay

Choreographer Kayla Farrish's newest work maps the journey of marginalized characters taking the reins of their own narrative. A dance-theater work set to a score of reclaimed Black American music, *Put Away the Fire, dear* explores Old Hollywood cinema techniques, revamped and remixed for live performance that intentionally disrupts oppressive tropes.

Support

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About the Solomon R. Guggenheim

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation was established in 1937 and is dedicated to promoting the understanding and appreciation of modern and contemporary art through exhibitions, education programs, research initiatives, and publications. The international constellation of museums includes the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice; the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao; and the future Guggenheim Abu Dhabi. An architectural icon and “temple of spirit” where radical art and architecture meet, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum is now among a group of eight Frank Lloyd Wright structures in the United States recently designated as a UNESCO World Heritage site. To learn more about the museum and the Guggenheim's activities around the world, visit guggenheim.org.

#GoingDarkGuggenheim
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