



AGAINST A SHARP WHITE BACKGROUND



HELINA METAFERIA

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METAFERIA'S GESTURES BECOME
A GRAMMAR OF DISRUPTION,
INTERVENTION AND INQUIRY.



COVER: *X*, 2018, archival inkjet print, 16 x 24 inches. Courtesy of the Estate of Sol LeWitt and Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art.

ABOVE: Helina Metaferia arranges work from the *Race Card* series during installation, spring 2020.

CHOREOGRAPHING DISSENT:

Embodiment and Archives of Collectivity in *Against a Sharp White Background*

Sarah Stefana Smith, Visual Artist and Postdoctoral Fellow, American University

Helina Metaferia's *Against a Sharp White Background* is an exhibition that turns the "white cube" – the institutional museum and gallery space where modern art is displayed, validated, circulated and consumed – inside out.¹ In a direct rejoinder to the canonization of individual "genius" (read: white men) often narrated as part of a heroic journey towards abstract expressionism, Helina Metaferia gives primacy, instead, to experiences of minoritarian aesthetics.² Through a range of media, she offers a methodical and contemplative look at those who have always been present, albeit without an acknowledged seat at the table, and brings attention to the exclusions, power relations, and "disciplining" inherent in art history as a discipline.

Zora Neale Hurston, mother of ethnographic literature of the African American south, provides the provocation from which the exhibition gets its name. Hurston's essay, *How it Feels to be Colored Me*, (1928) contemplates the effects and affects of racism as background to the author's becoming. Importantly, where Hurston feels most colored (when thrown "against a sharp white background") is also the site of immense self-autonomy, value and collective work, not an experience of "being tragically black."³ Hurston's essay signals the tension between feeling one's racial and gendered identity (as overdetermined) and *exceeding* these limiting assumptions. This tension is one of the great contributions of Hurston's work: it is also the tension at play in the objects and performances shaping Metaferia's practice.

Helina Metaferia's work unites a deep familiarity with painterly gestures with an intuitive formal language communicated in and through the body. These dual threads are informed by her training under Maria Magdalena Campos-Pons at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts at Tufts University in Boston, Massachusetts, where she developed a strong attention to installation, time-based media, and performance as a methodological tool wielded for a *future*, and not only framed through painting.

¹ The term "white cube" is used to describe commercial and institutional gallery and museum spaces characterized by a square shape, white walls and a light source from the ceiling: a design traditionally associated with modernism. Brian O'Doherty's 1976 three-part essay in *ArtForum* highlights how the gallery space is not neutral; rather it gives the illusion of neutrality by shifting the context of an artwork to one seemingly separate from any socio-cultural or political contact. O'Doherty's essay only begins to touch on issues of commodity, value and space. What appears at first blush to be a class critique extends to include how the white cube participates in exclusionary practices based on difference (race, gender, sexuality etc.) Nearly fifty years after O'Doherty's critiques, the white cube aesthetic (and its ideology) still holds. O'Doherty, Brian. *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999.

² By minoritarian aesthetics I mean to bring attention to histories of art-making by individuals that are racial, gender, and sexual minorities and/or represent geographical spaces considered to be at the margins. Minoritarian aesthetics highlight how artists and artist communities have contributed to broader art historical research, even when their influences and expertise have not been recognized. This lack of recognition and/or engagement traverses curricula in education, curation and collection.

³ Hurston references several instances of "becoming," including being one of few African American students at Barnard College. This tension is explored in the visual art of many artists, such as Glenn Ligon's text paintings. See Hurston, Zora Neale. "How it Feels to Be Colored Me" in *Folklore, Memoirs, and Other Writings*. The Library of America; 75. New York: Library of America, 1995.

Her mark-making process moves between contemplating canons and articulating their omissions, connecting both to the urgency of *right now*. Importantly, Metaferia’s practice offers the possibility of discursive dialogue around canonized belief systems and centers the material realities of racialized gendered subjects. This is particularly powerful in its application to institutional spaces like museums and academia, which operate through the control of difference.

BODY AS MARK

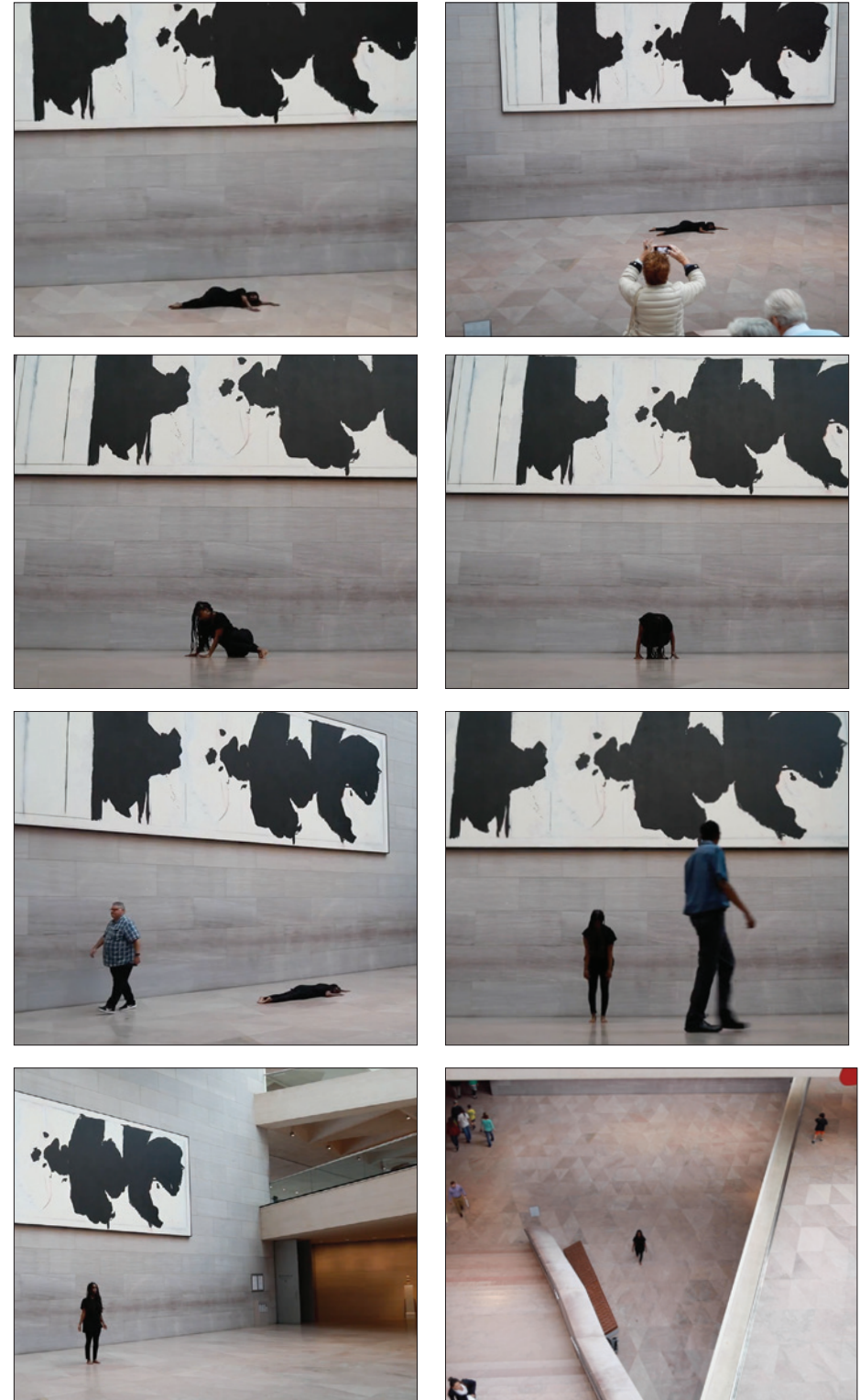
The body is not an apology. The body is always in space. The body is a constellation of the gestural, the social, and the individual. We use the term “embodiment” in order to generate a framework of meaning for physicalizing gesture and experience. Embodiment is urgent and undeniable. In Metaferia’s interdisciplinary practice, the body operates as a form of punctuation: a curve, an exclamation, a pause, an inert shape. In her 2008 examination of the performativity of punctuation in relation to contemporary art and aesthetics, performance and race scholar Jennifer De Vere Brody argues for the ways in which punctuation creates emergent space for interpretation, by which artists can critique and reformulate matters of “life and death and embodiment,” cataloguing “archives of feelings.”⁴ Metaferia’s gestures, her performative punctuation, becomes a grammar of disruption, intervention and inquiry.

Performance scholar Juana María Rodríguez contends that gestures operate “as a socially legible and highly codified form of kinetic communication, and as a cultural practice that is differentially manifested through particular forms of embodiment.”⁵ *Race Cards #1-6*, a new collage series made for this exhibition, is comprised of the artist’s hand (represented both visually and in terms of the underlying labor of cutting and pasting) arranged in various gestures that puncture and punctuate famous modern artworks that the artist found reproduced in magazines. Metaferia mines that tired trope, “playing the race card,” that is often deployed to suggest that someone has deliberately and falsely accused another person of being racist in order to gain an advantage. This trope neutralizes an unacknowledged privilege and simultaneously negates the material effects that racism has on racialized people. Metaferia rematerializes this phraseology, making it a real thing: a card, a trigger finger, an intangible presence hovering over an experience or encounter (#4), a crumpled text palmed in a hand (#5).

In her performances (documented in the exhibition in several video pieces), Metaferia activates the body as a constellation of improvisational, responsive gestures hurled at the overdetermination of mastery in American abstract expressionism.⁶ All her performances take place in major institutional art spaces.⁷ In *The Mother* and *Responding to Marks* (both 2018), Metaferia takes as a point of departure *Reconciliation Elegy* (1978) by Robert Motherwell and the color field paintings of Mark Rothko,

⁴ “Archives of feelings” is a term used by Ann Cvetkovich to mobilize archives as more than documents; ephemeral spaces that house the uncontainable: feeling, memory, nostalgia, want, and desire. This is much like the work Audre Lorde has done in the context of feelings and emotion as a critical site of inquiry for aesthetic practice. See Cvetkovich, Ann. *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures*. Duke University Press, 2003. For more on punctuation see Brody, Jennifer De Vere. *Punctuation: Art, Politics, and Play*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2008.

⁵ Rodríguez, Juana Maria. *Sexual Futures, Queer Gestures, and Other Latina Longings*. New York: New York University Press, 2014, 6.



FIGURES 1-8: Film stills from *The Mother*, 2018, single channel video (9:33). Courtesy of National Gallery of Art.

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THERE IS A LONG HISTORY OF TOWING THE LINE BETWEEN THE POLITICS OF REPRESENTATION AND VISUALITY IN MINORITARIAN AESTHETICS.



FIGURE 9: Film still from *Divination: Mapping the Unknown*, 2017, video performance with charcoal on painted panels.

respectively.⁸ *The Mother* opens with a wide shot of the East Building of the National Gallery of Art. Looking closely, a mark, a comma, clad in black, is located several floors below, and underlines *Reconciliation Elegy*. The ambient sound of people milling around delineates the space. Much of the documentation is of Metaferia on the floor, lying in stasis. Many people pass by. Some walk without a response, a few take pictures from the comfort of the stairwell. More than halfway into the performance, a man walks between the massive painting and the body lying beneath it. No sense of registering the body is apparent. This is what is most unsettling about *The Mother*: a mark, a body, a woman's body, a Black woman's body, can lay still for over ten minutes, with little to no response from the people passing by.

The four-minute video performance, *Responding to Marks*, begins with a seated body in space. The body punctuates. The voice breaks the cavernous hollow of the white cube. Symmetry, space, color, and rhythm as the formal elements of painting explored in Rothko's practice are translated through performative embodiment: what

is Metaferia's body but an extension of line and color, space and rhythm in painting? Her approach manifests humor. Not so much as a scapegoat, but rather as a satirical device, one that artists of color are often asked to participate in, in order to locate their work in particular genealogies of art as discipline. The subtlety of Metaferia's gestures is less about putting a Black body in space, or a straightforward mimicry of form: rather, these movements literally activate the space around "master" works.

Metaferia thinks about performance – like drawing and painting – in time and space, with the body as the medium. This intersection in time and space, through the body, not only activates objects, but also gets the artist closer to how African (and specifically Ethiopian) traditional and ritualistic art is produced. This is an entry point for Metaferia's broader interests in ritual, talismans of ceremony, and collectivity.

MARK AS AN ARCHIVE OF COLLECTIVITY

The urgency of Helina Metaferia's performative, collage, and video work resides in the archives from which she culls – ephemeral and otherwise. This distinction is an important revelation in the work, particularly because those most made illegible in archives of institutional building are often recognizable in unlikely ways. For performance, some of the defining characteristics of the practice – ephemeral, urgent, and fleeting – are not always legible and clearly defined. Without documentation, what do you make of a body inert below a "master" work? If no one sees the performance, or acknowledges its presence, even if it once was, does it exist? To negotiate that line between opaque and transparent legibility is political. There is a long history of towing the line between the politics of representation and visibility in minoritarian aesthetics.⁹

Metaferia is interested in Black visual archives of dissent. Again, the tensions between feeling "most colored" and not "tragically Black", the echoes of Hurston, are informative here. Metaferia responds to painting's canonical western histories and obsession with individual biography through Rothko, Motherwell, LeWitt, and others, in order to engage questions of power and prestige in institutions. Yet she also brings into the space a close attention to transnational and regionally specific Black and African feminist collections of ephemera, cultural reference and memory. The artist talks about her performance work in terms of ritual, ceremony and collectivity, drawing on her study of Ethiopian sacred texts that use the symbolic in order to think about shared experience. Additionally, an engagement with how women across Black and African diaspora space assert agency is reflected in summoning the likes of Shirley Chisolm and Queen Nzinga of Mbundu around a collective seat. Metaferia

⁶ Abstract expressionism is a post-World War II art movement developed in New York in the 1940s and heavily associated with (white male) painters such as Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko and Barnett Newman. Their work is associated with emotional intensity, mastered through self-denial (unlike other forms of expressionism in Europe), and narrated as a heroic encounter over the self in order to universalize human truth. Often missing from the narrative is the presence of women, Black artists and Black women, who were integral to the development of this time period. In the last decade, many exhibitions have offered a corrective. See for example: *Black in the Abstract*, curated by Valerie Cassel Oliver at the Contemporary Art Museum of Houston; *Beyond the Spectrum: Abstraction in African American Art, 1950-1975* at the Michael Rosenfeld Gallery; and *Generations: A History of Black Abstract Art* curated by Christopher Bedford and Katy Siegel of the Baltimore Museum of Art.

⁷ The artist has performed these activations at the Smithsonian National Gallery of Art and Mass MOCA.

⁸ *Reconciliation Elegy* was commissioned by the National Gallery of Art for the 1978 opening of their new East Building. With an unusually high number of Rothkos in their collection, the Museum recently completed their second monumental "Rothko Room" in 2016, housed in the Tower 1 gallery of the East Building.

⁹ Metaferia's decision to have the exhibition open in January as opposed to February, is an example of this line between legible and illegible. This choice, strategic and thoughtful, attempts to supersede the hypervisible mythology of Black history, intervention, and creation only taking place in the month of February. In the contemporary moment, conversation about race, gender, sexuality and other modes of difference have moved to consider politics of visibility and illegibility as formative modes of agency beyond the straightforward politics of representation. Conversations have turned to how power and agency find their way into practice and how artists and practitioners can choose to be opaque as a form of strategic dissemblance. See, for example, my article "Surface Play: Rewriting Black Interiorities through Camouflage and Abstraction in Mickalene Thomas's Oeuvre." *Women & Performance: a journal of feminist theory: Surface Aesthetics: Race, Performance, Play* 28, no. 1 (January 2, 2018): 46–64. For an example of politics of vision, see for example Fleetwood, Nicole. *Troubling Vision: Performance, Visuality and Blackness*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011.

understands her performative, collage, and video work as a genealogy of such practices and locates women's spaces as integral to collectivity.

Moreover, ideas of home, displacement, and longing permeate the artist's practice, reflecting and refracting how Black and African diasporic people – whether through forced removal through Transatlantic slavery, or other forms of migration and movement (such as war and famine) – make space and community. It is no coincidence that one of the first works you encounter in the exhibition acts as a gateway and a meditation on home. Located in the hallway leading to Gallery 360, *Divination: Mapping the Unknown* plays as looped content in the space between. The hallway, as a bridge, or a precipice, between there and here, inside and outside, activates spaces beyond the white cube, bringing forth what is possible, though yet to be imagined.

This time, the space is red. No sharp white background here. We – and by a we, I mean the viewer – enter slightly above the performance. The space pulsates with the performer in motion. We might see the red as blood, menstrual, or signaling the hand of labor, or as a *longing for*. The materials in use are minimal; the body black and charcoal. The body is the tool for mark-making as it migrates across the great red space: the hand, only an extension of the body. This kinesthetic friction conjures particular kinds of affects. At one point in the performance, chalky traces on the surface of the floor transfer to the body black. Former migrations are tattooed onto the body. The body knows; Metaferia just makes it visible to the human eye. Opening out, retracting, retracing, smudging towards something on the horizon. This is an ephemeral archive of dissent.¹⁰

Then there is *A Seat*, with the fullness of the work's title curling around its core intentions: to conjure the likes of Queen Nzinga, Rosa Parks, Shirley Chisholm, and Solange Knowles into the present. The video, photography and textual installation might begin as a conversation with conceptual artist Joseph Kosuth, to whose *One and Three Chairs* it is a reference; or maybe it is Judy Chicago's *Dinner Party*, where all women have a seat, but only one is Black – Sojourner Truth. *A Seat* continues with a proclamation as demand: we have always already been here, and we are brave.¹¹ A folded chair provides the readymade object and a character in the performance.

The seat, of course, usually connected to a table, physical or figurative, becomes the site of encounter, an entry point, and a move towards collectivity. To sit is to be part of, and *party to* a conversation at hand. And yet, a seat is not always given, a seat is not always about collectivity. Take for example, one of the namesakes of the work: the 17th century Queen Nzinga of the Mbundu people, who when speaking to a Portuguese colonizer who would not offer her a chair, created her own on the back of a servant.¹² Metaferia conjures all such tensions of power and access, unstated privilege and institutional critique, to probe the theory of a seat. A specific moment in which the folded chair is upended onto its back, its "usefulness" ruptured, rejected, subverted, stands out. This moment becomes the photographic component of the installation, installed between the video documentation and the chair itself. Ah, what a gesture! What a revolt towards something not yet here but made possible through imagination.

¹⁰ The germination of this work was on display in 2017 at Museum of the African Diaspora in San Francisco, and in 2018 at the Assembly Room Gallery in New York. For more information, see: helinametaferia.com/exhibitions-series/home-free.



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TO NEGOTIATE THAT LINE
BETWEEN OPAQUE AND
TRANSPARENT LEGIBILITY
IS POLITICAL.

FIGURE 10: Film still from *Divination: Mapping the Unknown*, 2017, video performance with charcoal on painted panels.

BY WAY OF A CONCLUSION: TOWARDS A REVOLUTION

Zora Neale Hurston was not a tragically Black woman, despite the sharp white background of racism and patriarchy. Helina Metaferia's work brings this tension to the fore. The works of *Against a Sharp White Background* subtly materialize the lived experience of racial minorities at the intersection of gender, under the guise of dismantling the master narrative.¹³ The works in this exhibition call forth and interrogate the very ground with which we understand art, difference and collectivity. Whether it is through a critique of master works, conjuring the divine unknown as a form of divination bestowed on those who have had to migrate, or dismantling the seat that could not rise to its collectivity, Metaferia shakes the very core of knowing. The work is shrewd, it is compelling, and it is all made possible in the underlining of gestures that puncture the seams of overdetermined thinking and doing.

¹¹ I use the phraseology "we are brave" to emphasise the intersections between race and gender and other modes of difference, unacknowledged and ignored. I also use the phrase to situate Metaferia's artistic intervention in Black feminist practice. In this instance I conjoin the practice to a key volume of writing at the intersection of race and gender, *But Some of Us Are Brave*. This text was a watershed contribution to feminist scholarship of the late 1960s that sought to critique the limits of white women feminism that ignored the intersection of race and gender as feminist concern. See: Cooper, Brittney C., Akasha. Hull, Barbara. Smith, and Patricia. Bell-Scott. *But Some of Us Are Brave: Black Women's Studies*. 2nd ed. New York: The Feminist Press at CUNY, 2015.

¹² For more on the history of Queen Nzinga of Mbundu see: Miller, J, and J Miller. "Nzinga of Matamba in a New Perspective." *Journal of American History* 16, no. 2 (n.d.): 201-16.

¹³ I am reminded of Audre Lorde's seminal essay "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House" where Lorde interrogates the necessity of imagining new tools of revolution and intervention. In *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*. Berkeley, California: Crossing Press, c2007, 2007, 110-114.



FIGURE 11 & 12: Close up of buttons derived from community responses, and installation view of a student interacting with *The Woke*, 2020.

STAYING WOKE:

Participatory Politics in Helina Metaferia's Practice

Amy Halliday, Director, Center for the Arts, and Curator, Gallery 360, Northeastern University

Constantly unlearning

... reads the button on the jacket of a distinguished law professor at Northeastern University.

representation means not having to think about representation

... proclaims another button on a student's backpack, as I make my way toward Ruggles station, climbing the stairs behind them.

Typeset in simple black fonts on white paper, sealed with a surface layer of mylar, the pin-back buttons are part of a participatory installation (*The Woke*, 2020) in Helina Metaferia's debut Boston solo exhibition, *Against a Sharp White Background*, in which the artist uses performance, video and collage to engage the exclusionary narratives of western (art) history's institutional spaces. Yet the buttons travel far beyond the walls of the university's contemporary art gallery, catalyzing conversation and connection. As they move across contexts with their wearers, so too does Metaferia's work of institutional critique, tracing paths between broader systems of power, privilege, and exclusion, worn on the bodies of lived experience.

The Woke asks viewers to respond to one or more of five questions that the artist developed alongside students in the lead-up to the exhibition; questions such as "What does it mean to be visible and represented?" or "How do you hold yourself accountable for social (in)justice?" "What are some tools of accountability?" Viewers write an answer of no more than twelve words, and post it in a small suggestion-style box. In exchange for their contribution, viewers take their choice of button from the small collection that has amassed on the shelf and which will dwindle over the course of the gallery's opening hours. In a week or so, the participant's own answer may have found its way onto a new series of buttons (the artist makes selections every two weeks for the duration of the exhibition, and students assemble the new supply), making undisclosed journeys into the world on someone else's lapel or tote, pencil bag or backpack.

By inviting, including, and setting into circulation the personal musings, ethical commitments, and potentially radical realizations of others, *The Woke* manifests many of the artist's key concerns. Firstly, as acts of immaterial value-making and dialogical exchange, the work challenges prevailing market forces. Secondly, the collective accretion of individual acts required to make the installation "work" disperses the singular authorship (and ownership) of the work of art. Finally, the material mobility of the buttons moves the artwork beyond the seemingly autonomous symbolic space of the gallery. What *The Woke* does, as Claire Bishop explores in her analysis of contemporary participatory practices, is to "value what is invisible: a group dynamic, a social situation, change of energy, a raised consciousness..."¹

¹ Claire Bishop, "The Social Turn: Collaboration and its Discontent," in *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*. London and Brooklyn: Verso, 2012. 1-11. p.6.

Responding to Marks, 2018, archival inkjet print, 16 x 24 inches. Courtesy of Kate Rothko Prizel and Christopher Rothko, Artist Rights Society NY and National Gallery of Art.



As viewers in the gallery engage with Metaferia's choreographies of bodily mark-making and intellectual reclamation in institutional spaces that have historically marginalized women of color, *The Woke* activates them to connect her work to their own experiences and agency. In doing so, they collaborate in puncturing the hermetic, non-communicative tradition of abstract modernist art alongside Metaferia as she takes on Robert Motherwell's brooding primacy in the Smithsonian National Gallery (*The Mother*, 2018), or deploys a full hand of Josef Albers's meditations on the relativity of color in *Race Cards* (2020).²

But as is the case throughout Metaferia's work, no gesture of reclamation, affirmation or consciousness-raising is quite as straightforward as it may initially appear. In *A Seat: Pulling up a Chair next to Joseph*, in conversation with Nzinga, Rosa, Shirley, Solange (2019), Metaferia invokes the words of Shirley Chisholm, the first African-American member of the Democratic National Convention: "If they don't give you a seat at the table, bring a folding chair." In the performance that anchors the installation, Metaferia variously carries the chair wearily, peers at it pensively, drags it along the ground, throws it in frustration, and claps it open and closed playfully, before finally sitting in it (though whether sitting represents a measure of success, or of resignation, remains unresolved.) Bringing your own chair – even if you're invited to the table – Metaferia suggests, involves a complex negotiation of space, energy, resistance, uncertainty, affect.

And so we return to *The Woke*. The modern use of the term "woke" is usually traced back to a refrain ("I stay woke") from the 2008 song *Master Teacher* by soul singer Erykah Badu, who finds her place in Metaferia's matrilineal line of power-brokers and narrative-shapers. Understood to mean "being attentive to important issues," especially around social and racial justice, the term "woke" has, in recent years, also become a cynical cipher for performative white allyship (as Amanda Hess points out in the uncannily titled *New York Times* magazine article "Earning the Woke Badge.")³

Indeed, while Metaferia's participatory installation offers transformative potential in the circulation of anonymous yet interrelational personal commitments, it simultaneously holds within its orbit the shadow side of performative wokeness as a new form of currency in gallery, university, and social spaces. How we choose to activate our participation in systemic change, as viewers – but also particularly as curators, artists, and educators in the contemporary moment – will determine whether we move beyond surface gestures. Metaferia herself sees the work as one of skeptical optimism, critically attuned, but with optimism as the animating force. For the artist, the work encourages – and champions – what Umberto Eco (in his writing on the poetics of "open" artworks) has articulated as "acts of conscious freedom," in which the participant/performer is positioned "at the focal point of a network of limitless interrelations."⁴

Another important component of the participatory practice that attends the artist's every exhibition is a series of intensive workshops for women-identifying campus and community members of color who are interested in investigating the role of performance in everyday life. Examining how trauma gets stored in the body, and sharing creative, tangible tools for self- and communal care, the artist leads participants through a series of writing, mindfulness, and performance exercises based on histories of social change movements.



FIGURE 13-16: Film stills from *A Seat*, 2017, single channel video (2:57), photo & relic installation.

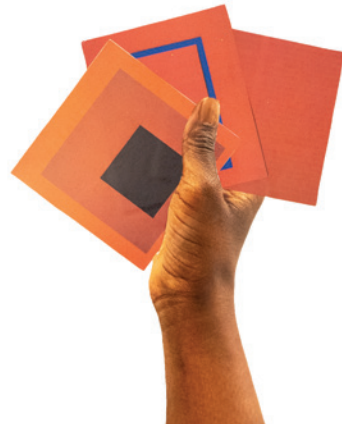
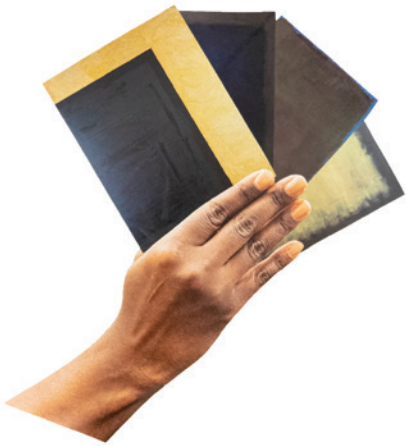
During her time at Northeastern University, Metaferia has been spending time in Special Collections, exploring the archives of local community activism around education, housing, and labor, and using the iconography and material ephemera of protest towards the workshops, and in the development of a series of new, monumental figural collages.⁵ At the culmination of the workshops, the artist invites willing participants to be photographed as the figural ground of these collages, their presence and shared labor becoming the embodiment of an ongoing archive of resistance. In an upcoming exhibition, these figures will march their way into the Museum of Fine Arts, that most institutionalized of Boston's civic spaces. It is this difficult, ongoing work that the artist undertakes, as the series title suggests, *By Way of Revolution* (2019 – present).

² For more on "dialogical aesthetics" as a rejoinder to hermetic modernist art, see Brian Hand, "A Struggle at the Roots of the Mind: Service and Solidarity in Dialogical, Relational, and Collaborative Perspectives within Contemporary Arts," *Irish Museum of Modern Art magazine*, Nov 11, 2015. Available: imma.ie/magazine/a-struggle-at-the-roots-of-the-mind-service-and-solidarity-in-dialogical-relational-and-collaborative-perspectives-within-contemporary-art/

³ Amanda Hess, "Earning the 'Woke' Badge," *The New York Times magazine*, April 19, 2016. Available: www.nytimes.com/2016/04/24/magazine/earning-the-woke-badge.html

⁴ Umberto Eco invokes the words of avant-garde composer Henri Pousseur in his reference to "acts of conscious freedom." See Eco's "The Poetics of the Open Work" (1962), in Bishop, Claire (ed.), *Participation, Documents of Contemporary Art series*. London and Cambridge: Whitechapel and MIT Press, 2006. 20-40. p.25.

⁵ Northeastern University's Archives and Special Collections, in collaboration with community advisors, preserves and makes accessible collections of records from African-American, Latinx, Asian-American and LGBTQIA activists and organizations in Boston, often entwined in struggles for education, housing, labor, and racial justice. Collections can be consulted in person and consulted online at library.northeastern.edu/archives-special-collections



Race Card series #1-6, 2020, collaged paper, each 18 x 18 inches (framed).



My Oracle Has Red / My Rhythm Has Blues, 2019, collaged paper, 8 x 8 feet.





Ruminating over Circles and Squares, 2018, archival inkjet print, 16 x 24 inches. Courtesy of the Estate of Sol LeWitt and Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art.



New(o)man, 2018, archival inkjet print, 16 x 24 inches. Courtesy of Barnett Newman Foundation, Artist Rights Society NY, and National Gallery of Art.



**And do you
belong?**

**I do,
I do,
I do.**



Installation view (right) and individual archival pigment prints (left) from *A Seat: Pulling up a chair next to Joseph; in conversation with Nzinga, Rosa, Shirley, and Solange*, 2017, video (2:57), photo, and relic installation.



The artist with her work, *Race Cards*, 2020. Installation views and artist's portrait photographs from Northeastern University by Brandon Farrell, courtesy of the College of Arts, Media and Design (CAMD)

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