



The Rage To Live: The Queer Film Legacies of David Wojnarowicz and Marlon T. Riggs
January 30th – February 2nd

Griffin Art Projects is partnering with the Morris and Helen Belkin Gallery and The Cinematheque to host a full weekend of film screenings, lectures and panel discussions dedicated to exploring the context of AIDS and activism through art and film. This program is presented in conjunction with Griffin Art Project's exhibition *The Sodomite Invasion*, and the Morris and Helen Belkin Gallery's exhibition *David Wojnarowicz: Photography and Film, 1978 -1992*.

Conversations on Collecting | January 30th, 2019 | 7PM

Join guest curator Lorenzo Fusi for a discussion revolving around the responsibility of caring for the archive and legacy of Jimmy DeSana. Building on one of Griffin Art Project's mandates to make privately held art collections accessible to the public, this ongoing series is presented in partnership with the Contemporary Art Society of Vancouver.

“The Sodomite Invasion” Opening Reception | January 30th, 2019 | 7PM
Friday January 31

Keynote: 6:30 pm

Lyle Ashton Harris

Lyle Ashton Harris (b.1965) has cultivated a diverse artistic practice ranging from photography and collage to installation and performance art. His work explores intersections between the personal and the political, examining the impact of ethnicity, gender, and desire on the contemporary social and cultural dynamic. His work is included in the collection of [the Museum of Modern Art, New York](#), and has been exhibited internationally, in the [Venice Biennale](#), the [Bienal de São Paulo](#), and most recently at the Centre Pompidou in Paris, presented on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of [Cinéma du Réel](#). He was the 2014 recipient of the David C. Driskell Prize from the High Museum of Art, Atlanta, and a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation fellowship in 2016. Harris's multimedia installation *Once (Now) Again*, was included in the 78th Whitney Biennial, his three-channel video work *Ektachrome Archives (New York Mix)*, 2017, was acquired by the Whitney Museum, and an artist monograph titled [Today I Shall Judge Nothing That Occurs](#) was published by [Aperture](#) in 2017. The artist currently lives and works in New York City and is an Associate Professor of Art at New York University.

Screening I: 7:45 pm

Black Is... Black Ain't (86 min.)

The *Black Is... Black Ain't* final cut was released posthumous in 1995, a year after Marlon T. Riggs' death of AIDS-related illness. This hour-and-half documentary represents the testament to the author's vision and socio-political commitment. It celebrates his legacy and was accomplished thanks to the work of his closest friends and collaborators. The film brings together many of the themes already discussed in his other films with an unprecedented urgency and determination. The footage shows the filmmaker engaging in the titanic effort to achieve equality, respect and recognition, whilst fighting supremacism and the oppressive forces of a patriarchal, stigmatizing, racist and profoundly phobic society, notwithstanding his quickly deteriorating health. In the face of it, Riggs breathes every breath until his last into this document that explores with compassion and rigor both the construction and misrepresentation of Black identity. Typically, *Black Is... Black Ain't* mixes diverse styles and genres and is difficult to define. By blending music, performance, reportage and poetry, Marlon T. Riggs creates a visual essay and art-house film that ultimately aims at dismantling the pillars of racial prejudice and injustice, besides highlighting the multiple shades and varied self-determined identities that Blackness addresses and encompasses.

Screening II: 9:30 pm
Self Portrait in 23 Rounds (70 min)

Saturday February 1

Panel: 1pm

Queer Perspectives: Intersectionality and the AIDS Crisis

Adrian Stimson in conversation with Lorenzo Fusi and Robert Reid-Pharr

Adrian Stimson is a member of the Siksika (Blackfoot) Nation. He holds a BFA with distinction from the Alberta College of Art and Design and an MFA from the University of Saskatchewan. He considers himself as an interdisciplinary artist, working across a wide range of media and has exhibited his works nationally and internationally. His performance art looks at identity construction, specifically the hybridization of the Indian, the cowboy, the shaman and Two Spirit being. Buffalo Boy and The Shaman Exterminator are two reoccurring personas. His installation work primarily examines the Indian Residential School experience, having himself attended three during his life. He has used the material culture from Old Sun Residential School on his Nation to create works that speak to genocide, loss and resilience. He has created collaborative sculpture work, working with relatives of Murdered and Missing Women to create *Bison Sentinels* and with the Whitecap Dakota Nation in creating *Spirit of Alliance* a monument to the War of 1812. He was a participant in the Canadian Forces Artist Program in Afghanistan and was awarded the Blackfoot Visual Arts Award in 2009, the Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee Medal in 2003, the Alberta Centennial Medal in 2005 and the REVEAL Indigenous Arts Award –Hnatyshyn Foundation.

Lorenzo Fusi (b. 1968) is the Artistic Director and Curator of the I Yerevan Biennial. He was the Artistic Director of PIAC (Prix International d'Art Contemporain) of the Fondation Prince Pierre de Monaco (2014-2020), and the Visiting Academic Curator at the Alberta University of the Arts, where he directed the Illingworth Kerr Gallery between 2016-2018. Previously, he was the Director of Open Eye Gallery, one of the oldest not-for-profit photography galleries in the UK. Prior to this appointment, Fusi was the International Curator at the Liverpool Biennial, for which he curated the 2010 and 2012 renditions, titled Touched and The Unexpected Guest. Between 2001 and 2009 he was the Chief Curator at Palazzo delle Papesse Contemporary Art Centre, to then become the Contemporary Art Curator of the Santa Maria della Scala museum hub in Siena (Italy). Fusi regularly lectures at universities and has a portfolio of around 100 curated exhibition projects and as many publications and almost 200 commissions.

Robert F. Reid-Pharr is Professor of Studies of Women, Gender, and Sexuality and African and African American Studies at Harvard University. He was previously a Distinguished Professor of English and American Studies at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, and both an Assistant and Associate Professor of English at the Johns Hopkins University. Reid-Pharr holds a Ph.D. in American Studies and an M.A. in African American Studies from Yale University as well as a B.A. in Political Science from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. A specialist in African American culture and a prominent scholar in the field of race and sexuality studies, he is the author of four books: Conjugal Union: The Body, the House, and the Black American, Oxford University Press, 1999; Black, Gay, Man: Essays, New York University Press, 2001; Once You Go Black: Choice, Desire, and the Black American Intellectual, New York University Press, 2007; and Archives of Flesh: African America, Spain, and Post Humanist Critique, New York University Press, 2016.

Screening III: 2:30 pm

Ethnic Notions + Affirmations (total 66 min)

With the Emmy-award-winning documentary *Ethnic Notions* (1987), Marlon T. Riggs firstly established his reputation as a radical filmmaker and uncompromising authorial voice. The film revisits over 150 years of American history through the lens of anti-Black prejudice and racial discrimination. By exposing and analyzing clichés, stereotypical representations of black people in the American imagery and collective consciousness, Riggs accompanies the viewer through a painful visual journey into the deep roots of the systemic devaluing of the African American subject, pinpointing their often-grotesque oversimplification and dehumanizing typecasting. *Ethnic Notions* constitutes a pivotal moment in the history of American cinema and broadcasting. With its focus on the racial inequalities expressed by and imbedded in the national visual, material and cultural history, *Ethnic Notions* is an indispensable and propaedeutic masterclass on race relations in the US to this day.

Affirmations is a short film made with the outtakes of *Tongues Untied* that similarly explores Black gay male's sexuality, as seen and experienced from within the African American community. The deep sense of isolation and neglect, if not straightforward rejection, that African American gay men often endure within their communities is addressed by a choir of voices vocalizing their alienation and frustration.

Screening IV: 4pm
Color Adjustment (87 min)

Considered a sequel of *Ethnic Notions*, the documentary film *Color Adjustment* (1992) analyses more specifically racial bias, discrimination and stereotyping in the broadcasting era, looking at the creation of ideas of Whiteness and Blackness in and through American primetime television. Riggs' main argument is that African Americans have been slowly allowed into television programming only at the condition that their presence would not challenge the American Dream: the construction of a national idea of happiness, perfected by the free market and consumerist society in the best interests of the advertisers. The documentary also illustrates how tv shows and the star-system have attempted to neutralize racial tensions in the US by systematically presenting only African Americans entirely assimilated into and sharing exactly the same values of the white establishment.

The film is narrated by Ruby Dee, actress and civil-rights activist with a multifaceted career as a journalist and writer.

Panel: 7 pm Keynote

Robert Reid-Pharr

Screening V: 8:30 pm
Tongues Untied + Anthem + Non, Je ne regret (total 101 min)

Likely the best-known and most controversial title in Marlon T. Riggs' filmography, *Tongues Untied* (1989) shifts the author's standpoint, further problematizing the issue of race relations in the US by introducing gender prejudice and sexual-orientation biases, also within the African American and the very same gay community. In Riggs' own words, the documentary was intended to "...shatter the nation's brutalizing silence on matters of sexual and racial difference." *Tongues Untied* primarily focuses on the disappearing of Black gay subject, highlighting their invisibility, in the public domain and discourse. Riggs argues that the Black gay man is not only subjected (as any other LGBTQIA+ person) to phobic attacks, prejudice based on their sexual-orientation, and discrimination by the heteronormative society. They are also objectified and trivialized by the white gay community unable, as it were, to come to terms with their dehumanizing projections and the desire of owning and controlling the Black body, thus insisting on slavery-centered tropes and power structures. Before its broadcast as part of the POV series on PBS, the film caused a national controversy and similarly to many other artworks of the period (David Wojnarowicz, Andres Serrano and Judy Chicago to name but a few) was systematically attacked by the puritanical and conservative American establishment.

Anthem, a nine-minute music video that mixes found footage and original material, including black male erotica and hip-hop music, featuring the work of six black gay artists (Essex Hemphill, Reginald Jackson, Steve Langley, Colin Robinson, Donald Woods, and Blackberri). By this time, Riggs had been already diagnosed with HIV. The work addresses frontally the disease by creating continuous overlaps between different forms of struggle and pride.

Finally, *Non, Je Ne Regret Rien (No Regrets)* portraits five black men fighting their battle against the HIV virus and unapologetically describing their experience, whilst affirming their rights to visibility. The camera almost caresses these men presented in all their dignity and vulnerability often only months apart from their own deaths. In a way, this documentary can be read a collective authorial self-portrait, at a time when, notwithstanding that HIV/AIDS was still an inexorable death sentence, the people affected had decided to speak-out (see ACT UP's campaign SILENCE=DEATH). This film program is followed by a panel discussion.

Sunday, February 2

Panel: 1 pm

Queer Legacies: New York & Beyond / Discussion of how the AIDS crisis impacted the art community in the 1980s/1990s and how the legacies of those lost are cared for through acts of commemoration and stewardship. Speakers include Jennifer Doyle.

Jennifer Doyle is a scholar, critic and independent curator based in Los Angeles, California. She writes about sexual politics, art and sports – sometimes all at once. She is a professor of English at University of California, Riverside, where she teaches arts-centered courses in Gender Studies/Queer Theory and American Literature/Visual Culture. As a curator, she advocates for performance-centered practices and has worked with Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions, the Vincent Price Art Museum and The Broad in Los Angeles. She is a member of the Board of Directors for Human Resources Los Angeles (HRLA), a non-profit arts space and curatorial collective based in Chinatown, and has been involved with HRLA since 2012. Her publications include: *Campus Sex/Campus Security* (Semiotext(e), 2015), *Hold It Against Me: Difficulty and Emotion in Contemporary Art* (Duke University Press, 2013) and *Sex Objects: Art and the Dialectics of Desire* (University of Minnesota Press, 2006). Her art criticism has appeared in publications like Frieze, Art Journal, X-TRA and Artbound, while her sports writing takes the shape of feminist commentary and has appeared in The New York Times, The Guardian and Deadspin.

Screening VI: 2:30 pm

Fear of Disclosure (7 min) + **ITSOFOMO** (49 min)

Screening VII: 4 pm

How to Survive a Plague (110 min)

RECEPTION: 6 pm

Screening VIII: 7:30 pm

120 Beats Per Minute (143 min)