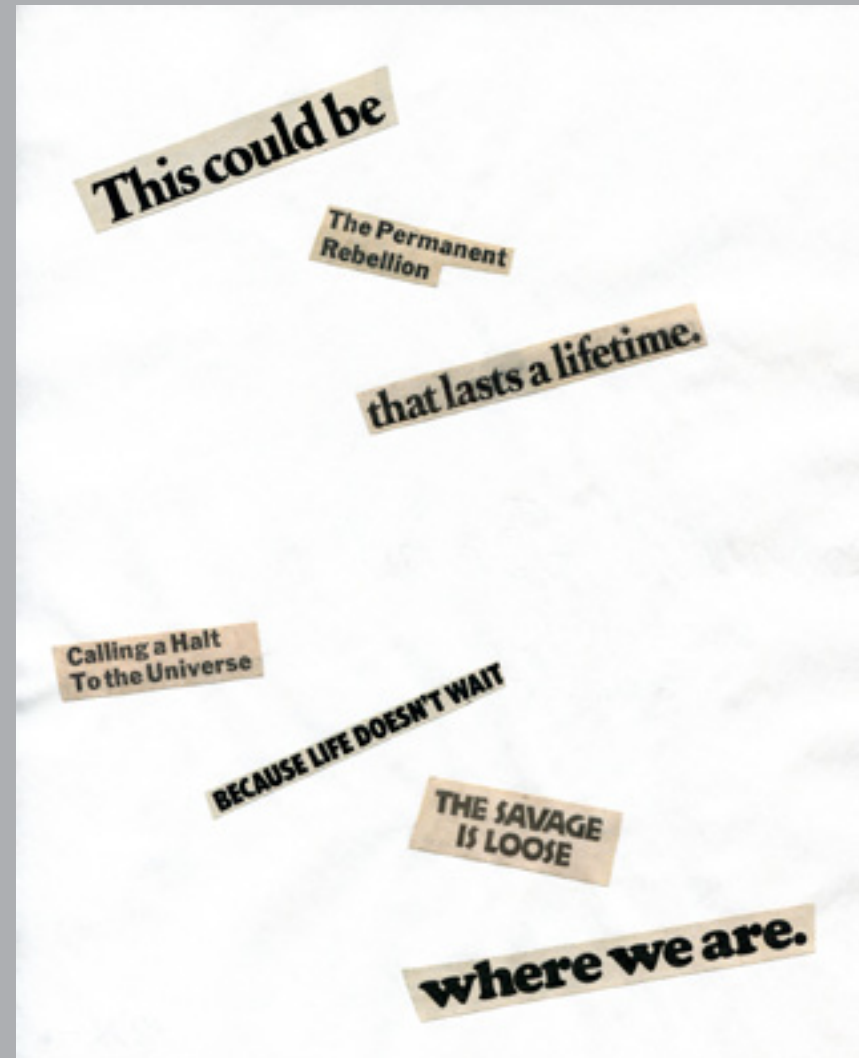


**LORRAINE O'GRADY**

**WORK  
DEVELOPMENT**

*A non-chronological mapping of the newly completed website, [lorraineogrady.com](http://lorraineogrady.com), to accent the emergence of the work's motifs through a back-and-forth interweaving across time*

*The continuing basis in language  
of the work...*



PANEL 6 OF "THE RENAISSANCE MAN IS BACK IN BUSINESS."  
FROM *CUTTING OUT THE NEW YORK TIMES*  
NEWSPRINT ON BOND PAPER, 8.5 X 11", DIGITIZED AND RE-PRINTED  
1977 (FIRST EXHIBITED, 2006)

*In 1977, for 6 months while undergoing a psychological crisis, O'Grady made a poem every Sunday from the New York Times. The goal was not a surrender to chance, but rather an attempt to locate meaning in randomness.*

*An iconic image from her best known work and its connection to language...*



**"MLLE BOURGEOISE NOIRE BEATS HERSELF WITH  
THE WHIP THAT MADE PLANTATIONS MOVE."**

**FROM A *MLLE BOURGEOISE NOIRE* GUERRILLA PERFORMANCE AT THE NEW MUSEUM, NY  
PHOTODOCUMENT, SIZES VARIABLE  
ACTIONS PERFORMED 1980-83**

*Mlle Bourgeoise Noire protested the virtual segregation of the art world of the time and critiqued those black artists making "acceptable" art to fit in. Besides giving away flowers and beating herself with a cat-o-nine-tails, she gave audiences a piece of her mind by shouting out poems.*





**"THE WOMAN-IN-WHITE GRATES COCONUT."  
FROM *RIVERS, FIRST DRAFT* PERFORMANCE, CENTRAL PARK, NY  
ONE-TIME PERFORMANCE, 1982**



**"THE NANTUCKET MEMORIAL STATUE STANDS MOTIONLESSLY IN THE STREAM."  
FROM *RIVERS, FIRST DRAFT* PERFORMANCE, CENTRAL PARK, NY  
PHOTODOCUMENT, SIZES VARIABLE**

*Rivers* was the artist's effort to yoke together her two disparate backgrounds, the Caribbean and New England, with an extreme layering and simultaneity of meaning. To the side of the Jamaican woman's house is a planted prop, the first prototype of the "fir-palm," a tree with Caribbean palm trunk and New England fir foliage.

*Two figures, a Caribbean woman and a New England man, remain passive throughout while others act around them. Until the end, when the Nantucket Memorial Statue comes to life and helps the Woman in Red across the stream—as the Woman in White continues silently grating coconut.*



"THE WOMAN IN RED WITH THE DEBAUCHEES AFTER REJECTION BY THE BLACK MALE ARTISTS."  
 FROM *RIVERS, FIRST DRAFT* PERFORMANCE, CENTRAL PARK, NY  
 PHOTODOCUMENT, SIZES VARIABLE  
 ONE-TIME PERFORMANCE, 1982

*It's a coming of age story, but the Woman in Red is hardly young.*



"THE WOMAN IN RED PAINTS HER OWN STOVE RED UNDER THE GAZE OF THENANTUCKET MEMORIAL STATUE."  
 FROM *RIVERS, FIRST DRAFT* PERFORMANCE, CENTRAL PARK, NY  
 PHOTODOCUMENT, SIZES VARIABLE  
 ONE-TIME PERFORMANCE, 1982

*She claims her own color.*



THE FIR-PALM, FROM *BODY IS THE GROUND OF MY EXPERIENCE*  
PRE-DIGITAL BLACK AND WHITE PHOTOMONTAGE, VARIED SIZES, 1991

*Eight years after Rivers, First Draft, the “Fir-Palm” became a black-and-white photomontage...The image anchored O’Grady’s first show of two- dimensional work, curated by Judith Wilson for the INTAR Gallery, New York.*





"ART IS... GIRL POINTING."  
 FROM THE ART IS... PERFORMANCE IN THE AFRO-AMERICAN DAY PARADE, HARLEM, NY  
 PHOTODOCUMENT, 20 X 24"  
 ONE-TIME PERFORMANCE, 1983; INSTALLATION, 2009



"ART IS... STONE AND BRICK WITH EGYPTIAN MOTIF."  
 FROM THE ART IS... PERFORMANCE IN THE AFRO-AMERICAN DAY PARADE, HARLEM, NY  
 PHOTODOCUMENT, 20 X 24"  
 ONE-TIME PERFORMANCE, 1983; INSTALLATION, 2009

*Art Is...*, her second activist performance, was a reply to a black social worker colleague in O'Grady's *Heresies* collective, who'd said: "Avant-garde doesn't have anything to do with black people." It was a glorious day. The parade performance resounded with shouts of "That's what art is, we're the art," and "Frame me, frame me, make ME art!"

*Just as magical were moments and spaces less easily understood. Here is one such favorite from the new Art Is... installation.*





**PERSISTENT** INSTALLATION, VIEW OF THE "DAVENPORT LOUNGE" WINDOWFRONT.  
ARTPACE, SAN ANTONIO, TX  
6 CHANNEL VIDEO INSTALLATION, RECONSTRUCTED WINDOWFRONT,  
FURNITURE AND FALLEN DISCO BALL, 2007



**PERSISTENT** INSTALLATION, VIEW OF THE "DAVENPORT LOUNGE" WINDOWFRONT.  
ARTPACE, SAN ANTONIO, TX  
6 CHANNEL VIDEO INSTALLATION, RECONSTRUCTED WINDOWFRONT,  
FURNITURE AND FALLEN DISCO BALL, 2007

Nearly 25 years later, *Persistent* echoed *Art Is....* O'Grady's residency at Artpace, San Antonio, coincided with the closing of the city's only multi-ethnic dance club. *Persistent* dealt with the patrons' bereavement. The windowfront was an exact duplicate of the club original but opaqued now. Unlike this publicity photo, which is lightened, viewers had to press their noses to the glass to see in. The door was locked to frustrate entry.

music coming out of the club was loud, a mix of old-school and house, with a little rap. When viewers peered inside, they saw an empty floor and monumentalized ghost dancers receding in and out of view on the walls..

*The work often intertwines intellectual and cultural arguments with personal memory and emotion...*



"WORLDLY PRINCESSES," DIPTYCH 11, *MISCEGENATED FAMILY ALBUM*.

L: NEFERTITI'S DAUGHTER MERYTATEN; R: DEVONIA'S DAUGHTER KIMBERLEY

CIBACHROME DIPTYCH, 39 X 28 INCHES, FRAMED INSTALLATION, 1994

INSTALLATION, 1994, FROM ELEMENTS OF THE *NEFERTITI/DEVONIA EVANGELINE* PERFORMANCE, 1980

*Nefertiti/Devonia Evangeline, a 1980 performance, attempted a reconciliation with her sister, who'd died unexpectedly just months after they'd resumed speaking following years apart. O'Grady's argument that American culture, like that of Ancient Egypt, has been irrevocably hybridized remains important to her work. Later converting that performance into a "novel-inspace" installation resulted in a more successful amalgam between the personal and cultural.*



"CEREMONIAL OCCASIONS II." DIPTYCH 07, FROM MISCEGENATED FAMILY ALBUM.  
 L: DEVONIA ATTENDING A WEDDING; R: NEFERTITI PERFORMING AN ATEN RITUAL  
 CIBACHROME DIPTYCH, 39 X 28 INCHES, FRAMED INSTALLATION, 1994  
 FROM ELEMENTS OF THE NEFERTITI/DEVONIA EVANGELINE PERFORMANCE, 1980



"PROGRESS OF QUEENS." DIPTYCH 14, FROM MISCEGENATED FAMILY ALBUM.  
 L: DEVONIA, AGED 35; R: NEFERTITI, AGED 36  
 CIBACHROME DIPTYCH, 39 X 28 INCHES, FRAMED INSTALLATION, 1994  
 FROM ELEMENTS OF THE NEFERTITI/DEVONIA EVANGELINE PERFORMANCE, 1980



"CROSS GENERATIONAL." DIPTYCH 15, FROM  
L: NEFERTITI, THE LAST IMAGE; R: DEVONIA'S DAUGHTER KIMBERLEY  
CIBACHROME DIPTYCH, 39 X 28" FRAMED INSTALLATION, 1994  
FROM ELEMENTS OF THE NEFERTITI/DEVONIA EVANGELINE PERFORMANCE, 1980

*“Chronological development” in the work is complicated, less straight-forward progression than a weaving back and forth over time...*



“FIRE RED.” COLOR-TEST DIPTYCH FOR [FLOWERS OF EVIL AND GOOD.](#)

L: JEANNE DUVAL; R: CHARLES BAUDELAIRE

DIGITAL FILES— SKETCHES FOR PROJECTED CIBACHROME DIPTYCH

APP. 80 X 50 INCHES, 2010

FOR WORK-IN-PROCESS BEGUN IN 1996

*Studies for Flowers of Evil and Good, a photo installation-in-progress on French modernist poet Baudelaire, his black common-law-wife Jeanne Duval, and O’Grady’s mother Lena, were made first in 1996. While The First and the Last of the Modernists, 2010, is actually a “bridge piece” between Miscegenated Family Album, 1980/94, and Flowers. Though Flowers predates FLM in its concern with Baudelaire and modernism’s relation to the “other,” it will be completed later and be visually more complex.*



"TOBACCO." COLOR-TEST DIPTYCH FOR [FLOWERS OF EVIL AND GOOD.](#)

L: CHARLES; R: LENA

DIGITAL FILES— SKETCHES FOR PROJECTED CIBACHROME DIPTYCH, APP. 80 X 50 INCHES, 2010  
FOR WORK-IN-PROCESS BEGUN IN 1996

*O'Grady's installation for the  
2010 Whitney Biennial...*



"DIPTYCH 1 RED: CHARLES AND MICHAEL." FROM [THE FIRST AND THE LAST OF THE MODERNISTS.](#)  
CIBACHROME DIPTYCH, 75 X 47 INCHES, 2010

*Texts on The First and the Last of the Modernists page of [lorraineogrady.com](http://lorraineogrady.com) offer a summary of reasons—considered and non-sensational—for treating Charles Baudelaire, the French poet, and Michael Jackson, the international pop star, in the same piece. The installation grew out of long concerns with Charles and Jeanne, his black partner, and their shared relationship to modernism...as well as new insights gained into Michael's character and work following his death. It was made as a variation on *Flowers of Evil and Good*, begun in 1996.*



"DIPTYCH 2 GREEN: CHARLES AND MICHAEL." FROM [THE FIRST AND THE LAST OF THE MODERNISTS.](#)  
CIBACHROME DIPTYCH, 75 X 47 INCHES, 2010



"DIPTYCH 3 BLUE: CHARLES AND MICHAEL." FROM [THE FIRST AND THE LAST OF THE MODERNISTS.](#)  
CIBACHROME DIPTYCH, 75 X 47 INCHES, 2010



"DIPTYCH 4 GRAY: MICHAEL AND CHARLES." FROM THE FIRST AND THE LAST OF THE MODERNISTS.  
CIBACHROME DIPTYCH, 75 X 47 INCHES, 2010



LEFT PANEL, THE CLEARING: OR CORTEZ AND LA MALINCHE; THOMAS JEFFERSON AND SALLY HEMINGS, N. AND ME  
PRE-DIGITAL BLACK- AND-WHITE PHOTOMONTAGE DIPTYCH, EACH PANEL 50 X 40 INCHES, 1991

RIGHT PANEL, THE CLEARING: OR CORTEZ AND LA MALINCHE; THOMAS JEFFERSON AND SALLY HEMINGS, N. AND ME  
PRE-DIGITAL BLACK- AND-WHITE PHOTOMONTAGE DIPTYCH, EACH PANEL 50 X 40 INCHES, 1991

*A piece that continues to haunt and inspire new work... The Clearing, first shown at INTAR in 1991, has had a difficult exhibition history. Many find it difficult to look at. To clarify that the diptych is about a relationship foundational for the Western Hemisphere, a subtitle was added in 1994. Its name is now The Clearing: or Cortez and La Malinche, Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings, N. and Me. La Malinche, the Aztec princess who became Cortez's translator, enabled him to conquer Mexico. The piece was made 7 years before DNA results confirmed the relationship between Jefferson and Hemings.*

*The question is often asked whether the diptych is the "before and after." O'Grady's usual reply is that it is the "both/and." The piece concerns, among other things, the simultaneous ecstasy and exploitation possible in most relationships.*



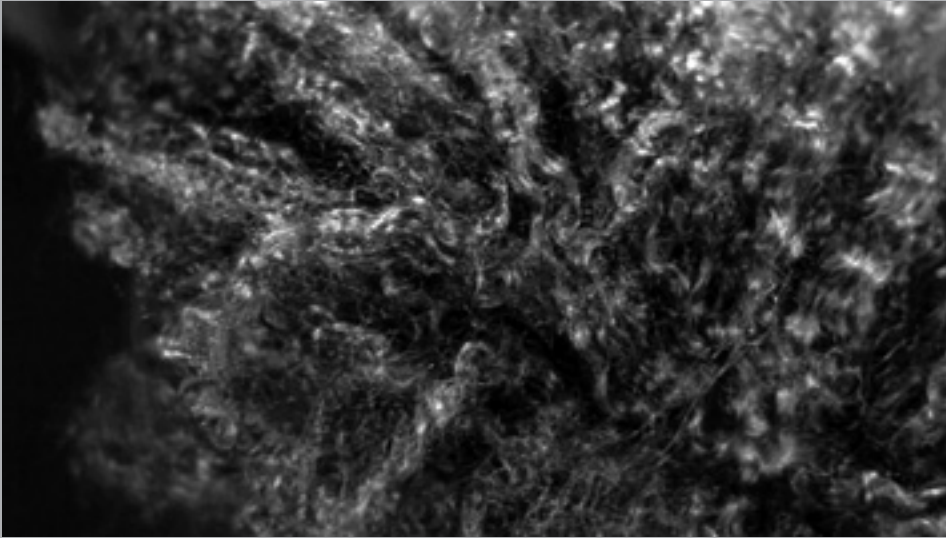
DETAIL, LEFT PANEL:

THE CLEARING: OR CORTEZ AND LA MALINCHE; THOMAS JEFFERSON AND SALLY HEMINGS, N. AND ME  
FROM PRE-DIGITAL BLACK-AND-WHITE PHOTOMONTAGE DIPTYCH, 1991

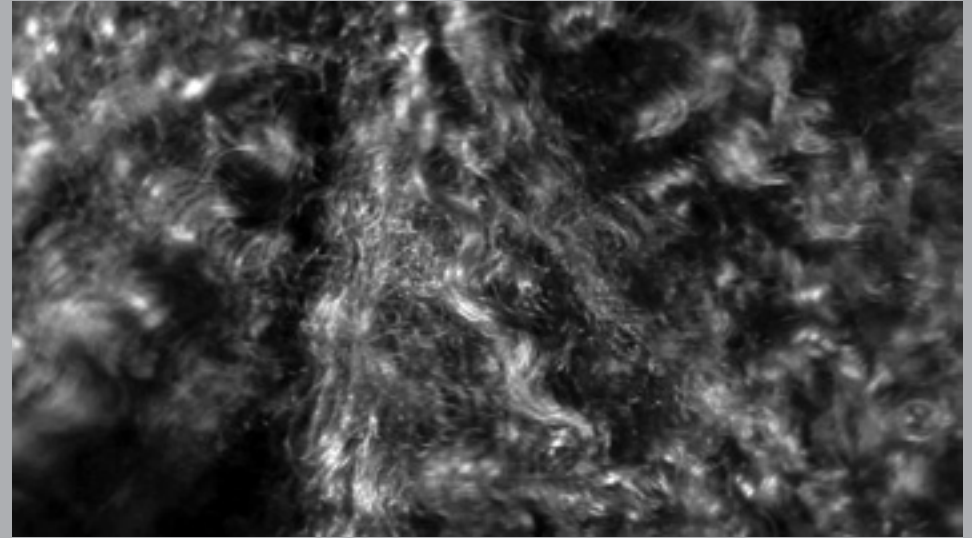


DETAIL, RIGHT PANEL:

THE CLEARING: OR CORTEZ AND LA MALINCHE; THOMAS JEFFERSON AND SALLY HEMINGS, N. AND ME  
FROM PRE-DIGITAL BLACK-AND-WHITE PHOTOMONTAGE DIPTYCH, 1991



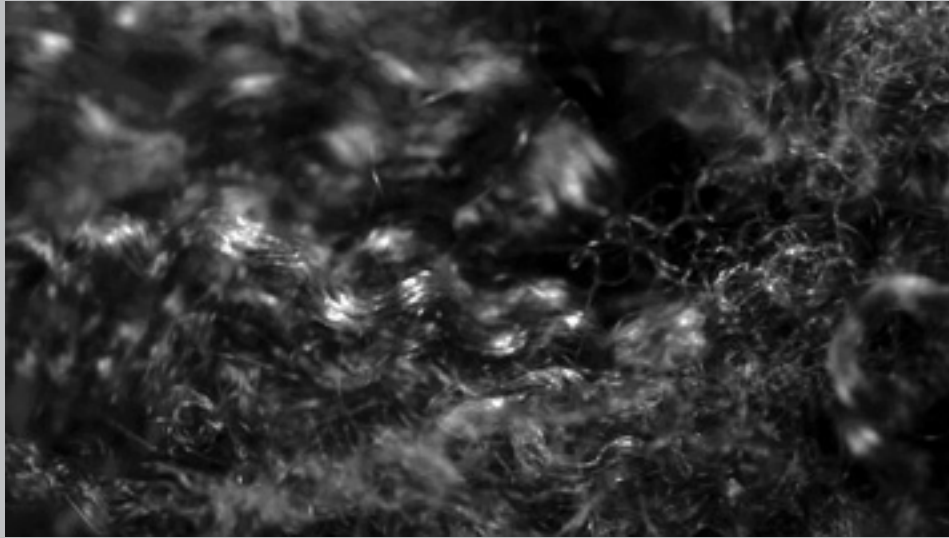
VIDEO STILL, *LANDSCAPE (WESTERN HEMISPHERE)* FROM DIGITAL BLACK-AND-WHITE VIDEO,  
18 MINUTES—BETA VERSION, 2010



VIDEO STILL, *LANDSCAPE (WESTERN HEMISPHERE)*, FROM DIGITAL BLACK-AND-WHITE VIDEO,  
18 MINUTES—BETA VERSION, 2010

*Landscape (Western Hemisphere) was made as a complement to The Clearing, but can be viewed independently...In part, it is about the transformation of the physical and cultural landscape of the hemisphere as a result of the occurrences in the earlier photomontage diptych.*

*Director, Editor, Writer: Lorraine O'Grady.  
Director of Photography: Peter Cramer.  
Producers: Carolyn Tennant and Sur Rodney (Sur).*



VIDEO STILL, *LANDSCAPE (WESTERN HEMISPHERE)*, FROM DIGITAL BLACK-AND-WHITE VIDEO, 18 MINUTES—BETA VERSION, 2010



VIDEO STILL, *LANDSCAPE (WESTERN HEMISPHERE)*, FROM DIGITAL BLACK-AND-WHITE VIDEO, 18 MINUTES—BETA VERSION, 2010

## What are your general artistic concerns, themes, or perspectives?

*Because I was raised by West Indian parents in one of the most traditional areas of New England culture, Boston's Back Bay, my childhood placed me at a distance from wherever I stood and required me to always build a bridge to some other place. One had to be several things at once...both Caribbean and New England, both West Indian and African American, both black and white...and to daily negotiate the differences, for example, between our impoverished Irish neighbors and the Beacon Hill ladies my mother designed clothes for. This exaggerated background gave me a bedrock belief in the necessity of the hybridized culture we live in and its possibilities.*

*Perhaps because I received a classical education, I find that I try to locate universal and timeless values in topical issues such as black female subjectivity, hybridity, and diaspora. My work also attempts a shift in the discourse to show that these topics have always influenced the history of modernism.*

*My art heroes are mainly literary. . . writers like Flannery O'Connor, Toni Morrison, and Charles Baudelaire. . . who sustain me in the belief that political and esthetic rigor are not antonyms, and that intellectual argument can also be emotionally moving.*

*I want to see myself as a calm reconciler of opposites. But at the same time, I know that I am in a state of "permanent rebellion" against the either/or binaries underpinning Western culture. I believe this tension, and the anger and alertness it provokes, are a source of strength in my work.*

## How has your work evolved?

*This is a difficult question for me to answer. When I made my first exhibited art work, I was 45 years old and nearly fully formed. I have continued to grow and will, of course, but the movement has been more a looping back and forth rather than a direct trajectory forward, returning to concepts that were overlooked, discovering which forms work and which don't. It's always hard to figure out how to present my work samples!*

*However, I am now firmly committed to the diptych in a way I may not have been before and see it as the most effective tool for presenting arguments around the "Both/And." Like any form, the diptych has its own rules, and as I have become more skilled at them, it's become easier to concentrate on subject matter, to be more concerned with the what than with the how.*

*I have also learned to accept some of my own inefficiencies. I probably will always waffle between narrative and activist impulses (hopefully, both can somehow be contained in the same work). But with the need to be more concentrated in my use of time, the work's objectives have become more focused. I see the issues in *Flowers of Evil and Good*, *The Clearing*, and *Rivers*, *First Draft* as continuing to occupy me for a good while. I may also branch out further into video and may even make a side trip back to performance, especially to highlight issues of difference. Now whatever I do will add to what has already been built.*

## CURRICULUM VITAE

<http://lorraineogrady.com>  
<http://lorraineogrady2.com>

Born September 21, 1934, Boston, MA.

Lives and works in New York City.

Represented by: [Alexander Gray Associates](#), NYC

Education

1955 B.A., Wellesley College

Select Solo Exhibitions

- 2012 SCHED Alexander Gray Associates, NYC. *New Worlds*.  
 2011 Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg, SA. "Rose O'Grady," with Tracey Rose.  
 2009 Alexander Gray Associates, Art Basel Miami Beach, Nova section. *Art Is....*  
 2008 Art Institute Chicago, Permanent Coll. Galleries, *Miscegenated Family Album*.  
 2007 Artpace, San Antonio, TX. Video installation: *Persistent*.

Select Group Exhibitions

- 2012 SCHED *La Triennale, Paris 2012: Intense Proximity*. Multiple sites.  
 2012 SCHED MCA, Chicago. *This Will Have Been: Art, Love, & Politics in the 1980s*.  
 2011 *Prospect.2*, New Orleans International Contemporary Art Biennial

- 2010 Kunsthalle Basel. *Strange Comfort (Afforded by the Profession)*, Gallery 1.  
 2010 MOMA, New York. *The Original Copy: Photography of Sculpture*  
 2010 Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. *2010: Whitney Biennial*.  
 2007 Museum of Contemporary Art, LA. *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution*.  
 2006 Daniel Reich Gallery Temp, Chelsea Hotel, NYC. *Between the Lines*.  
 1996 Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebaek, Denmark. *NowHere*.  
 1994 Cleveland Center for Contemporary Art. *Outside the Frame: Performance & The Object*.  
 1993 Printed Matter at DIA Center for the Arts, NYC. *Color*. Curator: Adrian Piper.

Select Performances

- 1983 Afro-American Day Parade, Harlem, USA. *Art Is... A Mlle Bourgeoise Noire event*.  
 1982 Central Park, NYC. *Rivers, First Draft*. In "Art Across the Park."  
 1981 Feminist Art Institute, NYC. *Nefertiti/Devonia Evangeline*.  
 1980 Just Above Midtown Gallery, NYC. *Mlle Bourgeoise Noire*. Guerrilla performance.

Select Curatorial Projects

- 1983 Kenkeleba Gallery, NYC. *The Black and White Show*. A Mlle Bourgeoise Noire event. 28 artists: 14 black and 14 white. All work in black-and-white.

Select Writings on Art

- 2010 "Lorraine O'Grady's Natures: A Conversation about 'The Clearing'." Radio program, narrated by Andil Gosine, for NCRA, Canada.
- 2010 Interview by Cecilia Alemani, on "The First and the Last of the Modernists." *Mousse Magazine*, Summer 2010, Milan.
- 2009 Artist portfolio, "The Black and White Show." *Artforum*, May 2009.
- 2008 "Lorraine O'Grady in conversation with curator Connie Butler." WPS1 Art Radio. *Historic Audio – WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution*.
- 2007 Comments in Maurice Berger, ed, *The 1980s: A Virtual Discussion*. Issues in Cultural Theory 10, UMDBalti more & Georgia O'Keefe Museum Rsrch Ctr.
- 2003 "Lorraine O'Grady on William Kentridge," *X-Tra*, Winter, special issue on film.
- 2001 Linda Montano, *Performance Artists Talking in the Eighties*, UCal, Berkeley.
- 1997 "Nefertiti/Devonia Evangeline," *Art Journal*, CAA, Winter 1997.
- 1994 "Olympia's Maid: Reclaiming Black Female Subjectivity." Joanna Frueh, Cassandra L. Langer & Arlene Raven, eds., *New Feminist Criticism*, 1994.
- 1993 "A Day At the Races: Lorraine O'Grady on Basquiat and the Black Art World," *Artforum*, April 1993.
- 1992 "Dada Meets Mama: Lorraine O'Grady on WAC." *Artforum*, October 1992.
- 1982 "Black Dreams." Essay, *Heresies #15: Racism Is the Issue*.

Select Bibliography

- 2011 James Rondeau, "Lorraine O'Grady." In *2007Artpace Residencies and Exhibitions*, publ. 2011, pp 56-63. Illustrated essay on Persistent.
- 2011 Katy Siegel, *Since '45': America and the Making of Contemporary Art*. Reaktion Books, London and Chicago, 2011.
- 2011 Malik Gaines, in "Looking Back, Looking Forward." *Frieze Magazine*, Issue 136, January-February, 2011, on *The First and the Last of the Modernists*.
- 2011 Andil Gosine, "Lorraine O'Grady's Landscape." *ARC Magazine*, Contemporary Caribbean Visual Art & Culture, Issue 1, January 2011, pp. 24-29.
- 2010 Aimee Walleston, "Five From the Whitney Biennial: Lorraine O'Grady." *Art in America* online, February 23, 2010.
- 2009 Massimiliano Gioni, "Lorraine O'Grady, *Art Is* . . ., 1983/2009." In "Expert Eye," *The Art Newspaper*, Art Basel Miami Beach, December 5-6, 2009, p. 12.
- 2009 Nick Mauss, "The Poem Will Resemble You: The Art of Lorraine O'Grady." Cover article, *Artforum Magazine*, May 2009, pp. 184-189.
- 2008 Holland Cotter, "Lorraine O'Grady, *Miscegenated Family Album*." Lead of "Art in Review," *The New York Times*, September 25.
- 2002 Cady Noland, "Artists Curate: Back at You," *Artforum Magazine*, January.
- 1998 Roselee Goldberg, *Performance: Live Art Since the 60s*, Abrams.
- 1994 Norma Broude and Mary Garrard, eds., *The Power of Feminist Art*, Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York.

Select Awards and Honors

- 2011 United States Artists Rockefeller Fellow in Visual Art  
2011 Art Matters, project grant  
2010 Brooklyn Museum Object of the Month (August),  
*Miscegenated Family Album*  
2008 Anonymous Was A Woman award  
1997– present Senior Fellow, Vera List Center for Art and Politics,  
New School University  
1995–96 Bunting Fellow, Radcliffe College/Harvard University,  
Cambridge, MA  
1983 National Endowment for the Arts, emerging artist  
fellowship

Select Museum Collections

Davis Museum and Cultural Center, Wellesley, MA  
The Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, CT  
The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL  
Brooklyn Museum, Contemporary Art Collection, Brooklyn, NY  
Harvard University Art Museums, Cambridge, MA  
Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, MA  
Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY

