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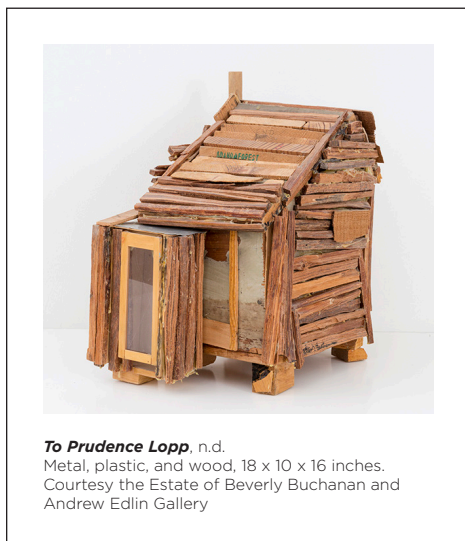
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August 17, 2017

The Spelman College Museum of Fine Art Launches its 2017 Season with a Solo Exhibition Featuring Acclaimed Artist Beverly Buchanan

Beverly Buchanan—Ruins and Rituals
September 14 – December 2, 2017



ATLANTA (August 17, 2017) – Through incisive considerations of site, history, biography, and portraiture, Beverly Buchanan (1940–2015) produced landmark bodies of work, including cast concrete and mixed-media sculptures, drawings and books, and evocative paintings and photographs. “Beverly Buchanan—Ruins and Rituals,” on view September 14–December 2, 2017, at the Spelman College Museum of Fine Art, is the most comprehensive exhibition of Buchanan’s work to date, with more than 150 objects, including sculpture, painting, photography, drawing, notebooks of the artist’s writings, and documentation of private performances. The exhibition emphasizes how Buchanan’s work resisted easy categorization and investigates her dialogue not only with a range of styles, materials, movements, and literary genres, but also with gender, race, class, and identity.

The exhibition features works that represent every phase of Buchanan’s career including early abstract paintings such as “City Walls” and “Black Walls,” which were influenced by her former mentors, Norman Lewis and Romare Bearden. It also includes site-specific work represented in dialogue with the architectural and archaeological sculptures that she called “Frustula,” from a term meaning fragments or broken-off pieces. Buchanan’s intimate photographic portraits will be shown alongside key examples of her best-known works, including small sculptures of southern vernacular dwellings or shacks.

The exhibition also includes the video installation, “June 10–19, 2016,” documenting four of Buchanan’s existing site-specific earthworks in locations across the American southeast and filmed after the artist’s death.

Buchanan's practice is informed by the histories of the locations where she lived and worked, including New York, Georgia, and Florida. The artist explored themes of memory and historical injustice, monument and ruin, as well as the forms and histories of southern vernacular architecture and site markers and meeting places.

Referring to the importance of place for her work, Buchanan wrote in 1988, "I think that artists in the South must at some point confront the work of folk artists, not so much in terms of the work but of the persons and the work as being of and from the same place with the same influences, food, dirt, sky, reclaimed land, development, violence, guns, ghosts, and so forth."

According to Buchanan in 2001, "I've read that my work is about nostalgia. It is not. It is about drawing with my camera and documenting old, former, slave cabins turned tenement houses instead of drawing with oil pastels." This engagement with social and historical memory informed both her public health career and her artwork across a range of media. By evoking unmarked and marginalized histories, Buchanan's work questions the complex relationship between commemoration and representation.

"Buchanan had a special relationship with Georgia throughout her extensive career," said Andrea Barnwell Brownlee, Ph.D., C'93, director of the Museum. "It is a great honor to present this important exhibition at Spelman. We are especially grateful to institutions and individuals in Georgia that loaned works and, thus, enabled the Museum to expand the examination of her extensive and under-examined career."

"Beverly Buchanan—Ruins and Rituals" is organized by the Brooklyn Museum and curated by guest curators Jennifer Burris and Park McArthur. The exhibition is coordinated by Catherine Morris, the Sackler Family senior curator for the Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art, and Cora Michael, former associate curator of exhibitions at Brooklyn Museum.

"Following the presentation of 'Beverly Buchanan—Ruins and Rituals' at the Brooklyn Museum in New York, the city where the artist began her career while working as a public health educator, we are overjoyed to work with the Spelman College Museum of Fine Art in presenting these works in the place where Buchanan lived for most of her adult life," said Burris. "By situating these works in the histories and landscapes of Georgia, the Museum's adaptation of the exhibition explores how Buchanan's practice engaged memory and trauma in the American South."

McArthur added, "Complex, contentious narratives are embedded throughout this exhibition. There is something powerful in this staging of Buchanan's work that isn't addressed in current discourse, and that wasn't addressed in the 1970s and 1980s, about what forms of representation become broadly recognized in the art world."

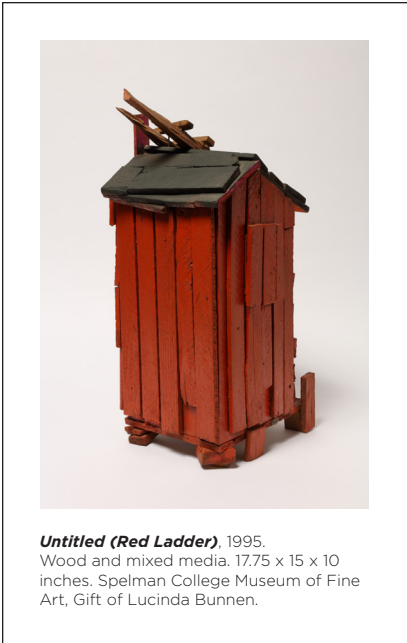
Buchanan was a game changer—for land art, for conceptual art, and for feminist art, noted Morris. "Folding these formal and political practices into discussions about her experience as a Black woman living and working much of her life in the Deep South offers a remarkably enriched reading of some of the most important art movements of the late 20th century."

Generous support for "Beverly Buchanan—Ruins and Rituals" is provided by Wish, Inc., and the LUBO Fund. Additional support is provided by Fulton County Arts & Culture.

RELATED EVENTS

Opening Reception and Curators' Lecture

On Thursday, September 21, at 6:30 p.m., the Museum will celebrate "Beverly Buchanan—Ruins and Rituals" with an opening reception. Exhibition curators **Jennifer Burris** and **Park McArthur** will present a lecture, which will provide an introduction to Buchanan's work that incorporates many fragments of archival video and audio footage of the artist speaking about her own work. Admission is free.



BLACK BOX: Yaba Blay, Ph.D., Professional Black Girl

On Tuesday, October 17, 2017, 6:30 p.m. **Yaba Blay**, the creator and producer of *Professional Black Girl*, an original video series and online social movement created to celebrate everyday, round-the-way Black Girl Magic, will present excerpts from the series and discuss her vision to expand the *Professional Black Girl* brand. Admission is free and the program will be held in the Camille Olivia Hanks Cosby, Ed.D. Auditorium.

There Is No Map: You Make It Up As You Go Along

On Wednesday, November 8, 2017 at 6:30 p.m. citizen artist **vanessa german** will present **There Is No Map: You Make It Up As You Go Along**. Using Beverly Buchanan’s life and words as inspiration and remixing the traditional artist talk, vanessa german uses movement, poetry, music, monologue, and art making to explore the anatomy of the human spirit that dares to make its own way. Join german in the Museum at 6:00 p.m. to view *Beverly Buchanan—Ruins and Rituals* and participate in a collaborative performance. Admission is free and the program will be held in

the Camille Olivia Hanks Cosby, Ed.D. Auditorium.

Be Your Own Muse, an original podcast series that the Museum launched in 2016, highlights Black women cultural producers. Previous episodes feature artists, arts advocates, and curators, including Mickalene Thomas, Firelei Báez, Mimi Plange, Jalylah Burrell, and Erika Dalya Massaquoi, Ph.D. Upcoming episodes will feature exhibition curators Jennifer Burris and Park McArthur, Lowery Stokes Sims, Alice Lovelace, Karen Comer Lowe, and recordings of Beverly Buchanan speaking about her mentor Romare Bearden, the Civil Rights Movement, and the life of an artist, among other topics. These episodes will contribute to the growing archive of information about Beverly Buchanan’s life and work, her connection to Atlanta, and her meaningful contribution to the art world. Listen to *Be Your Own Muse* at <https://soundcloud.com/spelmanmuseum>.

About Beverly Buchanan

Born in 1940 in Fuquay, North Carolina, Buchanan was raised by her great-aunt and -uncle, Marion and Walter Buchanan, in Orangeburg, South Carolina. Growing up on the campus of South Carolina State University, where her great-uncle was dean of the School of Agriculture, Buchanan spent much of her time in the school and on long drives accompanying her great-uncle during his work with tenant farmers. Receiving master’s degrees in parasitology and public health from Columbia University, Buchanan worked as a medical technologist for the Veterans Administration in the Bronx, New York, and then as a public health educator for the East Orange Health Department in East Orange, New Jersey. During the 1970s, Buchanan attended art classes at the Art Students League, where she studied with Norman Lewis, and was introduced to Romare Bearden and Ernest Crichlow. Buchanan is a recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, an Anonymous Was a Woman Award and two NEA Fellowships, among others.

About Spelman College Museum of Fine Art

The Spelman College Museum of Fine Art inspires and enriches the lives of the Spelman College community and the general public primarily through art by women of the African Diaspora. In “Six Reasons to Love Atlanta,” CNN.com praised the Museum for its “fantastically curated exhibitions” that focus on art by and about women of the African Diaspora. Since the Museum opened in 1996, it has established an impressive track record for organizing first-rate, mission-specific, art exhibitions that expand art offerings in Atlanta and the southeast region. It has garnered a reputation for organizing exhibitions that merit national and international attention. Milestones include being selected as the first institution from the United States that jointly (along with the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston) represented the United States at the 2012 Havana Biennial

in Havana, Cuba. The Museum is poised to continue its trajectory of pursuing ambitious relevant projects that have a lasting impact. For more information, visit museum.spelman.edu.

About Spelman College

Founded in 1881, Spelman College is a highly selective, liberal arts college widely recognized as the global leader in the education of women of African descent. Located in Atlanta, the College's picturesque campus is home to 2,100 students. Outstanding alumnae include Children's Defense Fund Founder Marian Wright Edelman; Sam's Club CEO Rosalind Brewer, Broadway producer Alia Jones, former Acting Surgeon General and Spelman's first alumna President Audrey Forbes Manley, Harvard professor Evelyn Hammonds, author Pearl Cleage; and actress LaTanya Richardson Jackson. For more information, visit www.spelman.edu.