

# SHANE CAMPBELL GALLERY

e-flux  
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## Performa



Adam Pendleton  
Just back from Los Angeles: A Portrait of Yvonne Rainer  
January 9, 2017, 7–8pm

Curated by Adrienne Edwards

Just back from Los Angeles: A Portrait of Yvonne Rainer is the third in a series of portraits by artist Adam Pendleton. The video poetically captures the choreographer, filmmaker, and writer Yvonne Rainer in conversation with Pendleton at a diner in New York City's Chelsea neighborhood. Rainer and Pendleton, through a scripted and unscripted exchange, reflect on life and work, politics and art, and the relationship between memory and movement.

Pendleton's video portrait of Rainer is the latest in a series of evocative personal accounts that have thus far included Lorraine O'Grady: A Portrait (2012) and My Education: A Portrait of David Hilliard (2011–14). Originally inspired by Gertrude Stein's text-based portraits, the videos capture beautiful, intimate, and profoundly self-reflexive encounters between the artist and his subjects. Pendleton's choice of interlocutors gives meaningful illumination to the ideas informing his Black Dada project and its aim of constituting new genealogies in aesthetics.

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Begun in 2008, Black Dada is a conceptual paradigm for a body of work, which includes ideas, paintings, sculptures, wall works, videos, a manifesto, and a reader. Black Dada references social and historical conditions through the formal methods of conceptualism, producing a point of convergence—the artwork, which sieves and questions matters pertaining to the freedom of abstraction in language and visual art, the animating force of blackness, and the strategies of experimental avant-gardes. Black Dada instigates and relies upon the possibilities realized through the melding of contradictions and aligning of seemingly incommensurable parts, references, and forms. Just back from Los Angeles: A Portrait of Yvonne Rainer is commissioned on the occasion of 100 Degrees Above Dada, the Performa 17 biennial's history anchor, and presented as part of the Performa Institute. As with previous biennials in which we explored Futurism (2009), Russian Constructivism (2011), Surrealism (2013), and the Renaissance (2015), we approach Dada's (1916–25) art historical relevance and influence on artists through unexpected and unusual perspectives and juxtapositions in intermedia art.

Pendleton and Rainer are paired by Performa Curator Adrienne Edwards as counterpoints to or varying entrees into the history, legacy, and influence of Dada in an effort to complicate and reimagine what we think we know about this art movement. Both artists share an interest in language and poetry, particularly when illogical and experimental, often incorporating them in their works. For instance, both wrote manifestoes that illumine the stakes of their art: Rainer penned the “No Manifesto” (1965) and Pendleton crafted the “Black Dada” manifesto (2008). Aesthetically Rainer and Pendleton demonstrate a proclivity for deconstructed and fragmented forms, which mine everyday dimensions of life for artistic material, frequently deployed with a sense of irony, and a preference for minimalist expression. They are both invested in art's revolutionary possibilities for social change. For Rainer, such a sensibility is evinced in her anti-war protest dances in the 1970s and the feminist dimensions of her radical choreographic style and films. While for Pendleton, the socio-political imperative is most recently manifest in artworks such as his Black Lives Matter flag for the Belgian Pavilion in the 2015 Venice Biennale and his latest series of paintings entitled Untitled (A Victim of American Democracy), which debuted this past summer as part of Edwards' Blackness in Abstraction exhibition at Pace Gallery and are now on display in Pendleton's first show with Galerie Eva Presenhuber, Zurich named Midnight in America.

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