

FORT GANSEVOORT



Renee Cox, *Raje for President*, Raje Series, 1998. Cibachrome print mounted on aluminum & plexi. 48 x 48 inches framed. Courtesy of the artist and Fort Gansevoort, New York.

March Madness

5 Ninth Avenue, New York, NY, 10014

On View: Friday March 17 – Saturday May 6, 2017

Opening Reception: Thursday, March 16, 6-9pm

March Madness is the second of two exhibitions that focus on the culture of sport as represented in the visual arts. Curated by the duo, Hank Willis Thomas and Adam Shopkorn, this year's exhibition centers on the realm of athleticism from the perspective of women.

The show features a roster of 31 artists, all women, whose artwork subvert masculine archetypes, and challenge more docile notions of femininity by highlighting the qualities of strength, fitness and agility that are characteristic of physical skill and capability. These aesthetic

observations of the physical form become metaphors by which to consider broader issues about empowerment, gender roles, beauty, politics, labor, popular-culture – as well as ethnic and racial histories.

For many, sports are a vehicle for upward mobility. The glamour of the professional athlete has attracted the ambition of young people for generations, and the ritual of competition liken the atmosphere at sporting events to that of a religious experience. For these reasons, the collective activity of participating in sports is imbued with the sensation of transcending physical and mental limitations.

The title of the show, *March Madness*, is appropriated from the name of the popular, national college basketball tournament, and speaks to the emotional fervor generated by sporting events. This exhibition also coincides with Women's History Month, and the recent political activity designed by and on the behalf of women to call attention to social justice issues connected to race, gender, sexuality, immigration and the environment.

Thomas and Shopkorn, who are both sports fans, are well aware of "the history of the intersection of sports and politics." The previous *March Madness* exhibition, for example, "reflected the classic spirit of the black power salute at the 1968 Olympics." This year's exhibition expands on this theme by "celebrating the position of women as artists and citizens who are central in pushing critical issues forward." The artists in this exhibition are using the action, symbolism and elements of sport to call attention to narratives that are overlooked, and as a method to innovate beyond the social and cultural circumstances of everyday life.

By Kalia Brooks

Featured artists in the show are Gina Adams, Emma Amos, Kathryn Andrews, Kristin Baker, Sadie Barnette, Holly Bass, Zoe Buckman, Jordan Casteel, Elizabeth Catlett, Pamela Council, Renee Cox, Rineke Dijkstra, Rosalyn Drexler, Sylvie Fleury, Rin Johnson, Miranda July, Catherine Opie, Howardena Pindell, Cheryl Pope, Leni Riefenstahl, Faith Ringgold, Deborah Roberts, Martha Rosler, Alison Saar, Betye Saar, Collier Schorr, Laurel Shear, Cindy Sherman, Jean Shin, Ashley Teamer, and Deborah Willis.

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Hank Willis Thomas Bio

Hank Willis Thomas is a photo conceptual artist working primarily with themes related to identity, history and popular culture. He received a BFA in Photography and Africana studies from New York University and his MFA/MA in Photography and Visual Criticism from the California College of Arts. Thomas' monograph, *Pitch Blackness*, was published by Aperture. He has exhibited throughout the U.S. and abroad including, the International Center of Photography, Galerie Michel Rein in Paris, Studio Museum in Harlem, Galerie Henrik Springmann in Berlin, and the Baltimore Museum of Art, among others. Thomas' work is in numerous public collections including The Museum of Modern Art New York, The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, The Whitney Museum of American Art, The Brooklyn Museum, The High Museum of Art and the National Gallery of Art in Washington DC. His collaborative projects have been featured at the Sundance Film Festival and installed permanently at the Oakland International Airport, The Birmingham-Shuttlesworth International Airport, The Oakland Museum of California, and the University of California, San Francisco. He is also and a recipient of the New Media grant from Tribeca Film Institute and New Media Infinity Award from the International Center of Photography for his transmedia project, *Question Bridge: Black Males*. Recent notable exhibitions include Hank Willis Thomas at the Cleveland Museum of Art and *Repetition and Difference* at the Jewish Museum in New York. He was recently appointed to the Public Design Commission for the city of New York. Thomas is represented by Jack Shainman Gallery in New York City and Goodman Gallery in South Africa.

Adam Shopkorn Bio

Art advisor, gallerist and curator Adam Shopkorn began his career in art while attending NYU's Stern School of Business, putting together contemporary art collections for private clients. He continues to consult for a number of clients across the globe. From the fall of 2011 through the end of 2014, Shopkorn was the Cultural Ambassador for Morgans Hotel Group. In his time as Cultural Ambassador, he collaborated with many notable artists to enhance the creative ethos of Morgans Hotel Group. For the design of Mondrian SoHo, he worked with the estate of Sol LeWitt, to display the late artist's photographic series "On The Walls of the Lower East Side" on the exterior façade, and with Marilyn Minter, who created a customized wallpaper for the lobby. He completed a project titled *PLANE TEXT*, which took place at Art Basel Miami in December 2012 and won a prestigious *Wallpaper Magazine* design award for "Best High Art." The project was an aerial exhibition of word banners from 15 of the world's highest profile artists. Ed Ruscha, Richard Prince and John Baldessari, among others, each contributed a phrase that was then flown across the Miami skyline. Recently, Shopkorn organized two sports driven art shows at Salon 94 titled "For the Kids" and "Transition Game" and is currently building a dynamic art program for Flight Club New York, the world's number one sneaker marketplace. In the summer of 2015, he opened Fort Gansevoort, a gallery and multipurpose cultural space in the heart of NYC's Meatpacking District. In addition to his work in the art world, Shopkorn is also involved in film. Prior to attending NYU, he assisted Edward Pressman, producer of films such as *Wall Street*, *City Hall*, *Hoffa* and *American Psycho*. After leaving Pressman Films, he began work on a documentary about the life of ex-basketball player Lenny Cooke. The film was completed in 2013 where it premiered at New York's Tribeca Film Festival. The film found a home at Showtime and ESPN and was nominated for a 2014 Black Reel Award for outstanding independent documentary. Shopkorn has an English and Art History Degree from Tufts University and an MBA from NYU's Stern School of Business.