



## Commemorating Stonewall Through the art of Queer Millennials



A new exhibit at the Brooklyn Museum called “Nobody Promised You Tomorrow: Art 50 Years After Stonewall” features 28 LGBTQ artists born after 1969 whose work explores themes of inclusion, identity, gender and race. The exhibit takes its name from a quote by pioneering transgender activist Marsha P. Johnson, in an effort to underscore both the powerful joy and ever-present danger of being part of the LGBTQ community now and throughout history. Two artists included in the show spoke with WNYC’s cultural critic Rebecca Carroll about their work, and what it feels like to make art in the current political climate.

“I think we’re living in really strange times, to be quite frank,” said Kiyan Williams, a gender non-conforming multi-disciplinary artist whose piece in the show, *Reflections*, reconsiders and interprets archived interviews conducted by iconic gay black filmmaker Marlon Riggs. “I’m thinking about just in the past week the number of black trans and gender-nonconforming people who were murdered. I’m thinking about how the White House just removed so many protections that the state afforded to trans folks. So given that context, I think it’s really significant that a show like this is present and existing in this moment.”

# PERES PROJECTS

Williams, whose preferred pronouns are ‘they/them’, says their work is interested drawing connections between different groups of people. “Normative gender impacts all of us — not just trans or gender non-conforming people.”

Mexican-American artist Felipe Baeza, who was born in Mexico and grew up the child of immigrant parents, uses a range of materials to examine what he calls the “double closet” of being queer and undocumented. “I’ve been thinking about invisibility as a space of power,” Baeza says. “I feel like visibility is a trap for a lot of us. Growing up undocumented and queer, you quickly learn when to be visible and when not to be visible. And visibility can mean death for a lot of us.”

Williams and Baeza also spoke about the impact of each other’s work. “Something about these bodies, these outlines of these two figures existing within the obscurity of the color,” said Williams of Baeza’s piece, which depicts two bodies entangled, one red, one blue. “It held my eyes.” Baeza said he was struck by the flamboyance in Williams’ work, which includes a performance by Williams. “Seeing this body being in its full state of being...was amazingly beautiful.”

“Nobody Promised You Tomorrow: Art 50 Years After Stonewall” is at the Brooklyn Museum through December 8, 2019.

Listen: <https://www.wnyc.org/story/art-commemorating-stonewall-50-through-queer-millennial-lens/>