

# Exhibitions & Publication

## EXHIBITIONS

### *Bridget Riley: Perceptual Abstraction*

THROUGH JULY 24, 2022

### *Marc Quinn: History Painting +*

THROUGH OCTOBER 16, 2022

### *Richard Long: Quantock Wood Circle*

AUGUST 24, 2022 – FEBRUARY 19, 2023

Turner Prize–winning artist Richard Long (b. 1945) is a pioneer of land art. His 1981 work *Quantock Wood Circle* consists of 285 weathered branches Long collected while walking in the Quantock Hills near his home in Somerset, England. With each stick roughly the same size and arranged in an ordered pattern on the floor, the sculpture traverses the line between nature and artifact, exploring the relationship between nature’s free-form beauty and our own mechanistic systems for measuring space and time. When viewed from above, *Quantock Wood Circle* resembles a map or an aerial plan, its circular shape an archetype associated with perfection, unity, and the infinite.

Installed in the YCBA’s Library Court among picturesque landscapes by Thomas Gainsborough (1727–1788), George Stubbs (1724–1806), and Richard Wilson (1714–1782), the sculpture demonstrates Britain’s centuries-old artistic tradition of imposing order on nature and idealizing the English landscape. Since 1964, when he first photographed the tracks left by rolling a snowball through snow, Long has explored the intimate and fragile relationship between human beings and the landscape. The genesis of all his work is the fundamental human act of walking; by pausing to collect materials or create a sculpture, Long transforms a walk into a creative practice. Through text, paintings, photographs, and sculptures made from the materials he collects, Long documents the traces of his presence in the land, recording fleeting interactions between humans and nature.

*Richard Long: Quantock Wood Circle* was accompanied by an international research symposium, “Works on the Floor” (see *Programs*).

### *Interior Dialogues: Works from the Collection*

AUGUST 24, 2022 – FEBRUARY 26, 2023

Inspired by the collaged portraits and interiors on view in *The Hilton Als Series: Njideka Akunyili Crosby* (see below), this collection display explored themes related to the body, domestic space, and the collage technique. As in Akunyili Crosby’s practice, which is grounded in figures and

materials of personal significance, the intimacy of these works creates new possibilities for artistic expression. Executed on a small scale that encourages close looking, each artwork reveals a private world unique to the artist.

Figures are rendered with informal familiarity, becoming vehicles for visual exploration. Representations of domestic space, whether real or imagined, are encoded with personal identities and a sense of belonging. The collages juxtapose nostalgic images from popular culture, evoking the introspective feel of a childhood scrapbook.

Featured in the display were paintings and works on paper by Frank Auerbach, Vanessa Bell, Duncan Grant, Nigel Henderson, Gwen John, John McHale, and Lynette Yiadom-Boakye, as well as a work by Akunyili Crosby, Yale MFA 2011, that was on loan from the Yale University Art Gallery.

*Interior Dialogues: Works from the Collection* was curated by Rachel Stratton, Postdoctoral Research Associate, and David K. Thompson, Coordinator of Cataloguing.

### *The Hilton Als Series: Njideka Akunyili Crosby*

SEPTEMBER 22, 2022 – JANUARY 22, 2023

This focused exhibition of works by Njideka Akunyili Crosby (b. 1983) was the third and final show in a series curated by the Pulitzer Prize-winning author Hilton Als in collaboration with the YCBA and each artist. Previous exhibitions featured works by Celia Paul (2018) and Lynette Yiadom-Boakye (2019).

Als and Akunyili Crosby selected works from *The Beautiful Ones*, the artist's ongoing series of intimate portraits of Nigerian children, including members of her own family. The title references the classic novel *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* (1968) by Ghanaian author Ayi Kwei Armah. Published in a year of worldwide civic and social unrest, Armah's book comments on the challenges of revolution, addresses the unfulfilled political promises of the postcolonial African nation-state, and looks ahead from a place of lost hope.

Akunyili Crosby is a leading contemporary artist whose work offers critical perspectives on post-colonial history and experience as well as transnational identities. Born and raised in Nigeria, she came to the United States in 1999 to attend the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and Swarthmore College, before obtaining an MFA from Yale University. Now based in Los Angeles, Akunyili Crosby has been the subject of several high-profile and well-received solo exhibitions in both the United States and the United Kingdom, notably at the Baltimore Museum of Art, the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, and the National Portrait Gallery, London. In 2017 she was awarded a MacArthur Fellowship "genius grant."

*The Hilton Als Series: Njideka Akunyili Crosby* was organized by the Yale Center for British Art and curated by Hilton Als, staff writer for the *New Yorker* and associate professor of writing at Columbia University. The exhibition subsequently traveled to the Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens in San Marino, California, where it was on view February 15 through June 12, 2023.

## *Steve McQueen: Lynching Tree*

SEPTEMBER 22 – OCTOBER 30, 2022

Across a diverse body of work spanning thirty years, British artist and filmmaker Steve McQueen (b. 1969) has documented stories of incarceration and violence, intimacy and vulnerability. The museum displayed a single work by McQueen on the occasion of an international symposium on October 28 and 29.

*Lynching Tree* (2013) is a color photograph mounted in a lightbox that depicts an old tree with thick, sprawling branches. The tree stands in a clearing littered with leaves and grass and is surrounded by bushes and scrawny saplings. Only the title of the image reveals the horror of this apparently pastoral scene. The tree was used as a gallows for enslaved Black people; the unmarked graves of victims lie beneath it.

McQueen took the photograph on the outskirts of New Orleans in 2012, at one of the filming locations for *12 Years a Slave* (2013). The film's protagonist, Solomon Northup, passes by the tree, knowing that he easily could have been one of the two young men whose murder he witnesses. In *Lynching Tree*, McQueen memorializes the lives and deaths of Black people in the United States. Like many landscape paintings in the YCBA collection, the photograph simultaneously reveals and obscures the interrelation of the violence of British colonialism and the transatlantic slave trade.

To contextualize *Lynching Tree* for museum visitors, the YCBA Education department created an adjacent reading room where visitors could read Northup's book and related materials; learn more about McQueen's work, the film, and the historical context of the events they depict; or simply sit and reflect. Visitors were invited to leave comment cards documenting their responses to the work, which were then displayed in the reading room for subsequent visitors to view.

## *Bill Brandt | Henry Moore*

NOVEMBER 17, 2022 – FEBRUARY 26, 2023

"The camera," said Orson Welles, "is much more than a recording apparatus, it is a medium via which messages reach us from another world." It was the camera, and the political and cultural circumstances of picture-making during the Second World War, that first brought Bill Brandt (1904–1983) and Henry Moore (1898–1986) together. During the Blitz, these two artists produced images for the British government of civilians sheltering in the London Underground. Widely disseminated through news media and exhibitions, their haunting depictions of this human crisis became defining images of the war.

The exhibition began with these early works and traced the artists' intersecting paths and creative exchange across the postwar years. For both artists, Britain's landscape and its majestic megaliths, such as Stonehenge and Avebury, demonstrated the arresting power of sculptural forms. At a time of national recovery, Brandt and Moore looked to forms in nature as a means of expressing subjective experience and evoking the human body. Reworking these motifs across different media, the two artists explored the ability of images to reflect different artistic, political, and social contexts.

Drawings, photographs, and sculptures were shown alongside experimental photo collages, rare color transparencies, unprinted negatives, and the popular magazines that published the artists' work. Viewed together, these diverse creative materials demonstrated the interdisciplinary nature of art making in the twentieth century.

*Bill Brandt | Henry Moore* was curated by Martina Droth, Deputy Director and Chief Curator, and organized in partnership with the Hepworth Wakefield, UK. It was on view at The Hepworth Wakefield February 6 to November 1, 2020, and at the Sainsbury Centre, University of East Anglia, May 18 to August 22, 2021. It was accompanied by a fully illustrated book, published in 2020, which was edited by Droth and Paul Messier, Pritzker Director of the Lens Media Lab at Yale's Institute for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage. The exhibition and its accompanying publication were generously supported by David Dechman and Michel Mercure, Laura and James Duncan (Yale BA 1975), the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and the John Pritzker Family Fund.

### *The View From Here*

JANUARY 21 – APRIL 2, 2023

This exhibition highlighted the work of student-photographers from Greater New Haven who participated in “The View From Here: Accessing Art Through Photography” in fall 2022. This annual program, established in 2021, offers local students the opportunity to engage directly with professionals in the world of photography, including art historians, conservators, curators, educators, and photographers. Unlike the initial program in spring 2021, which was taught entirely online, this year's classes were taught at the YCBA, enabling access to the museum's rich collection of historic and contemporary photographs. Guest instructors included Yale School of Art faculty members Lisa Kereszi and Ted Partin.

During the program, eleven students from local colleges and public high schools learned about the history, methods, and science of photography. They captured cityscapes, landscapes, and portraits using smartphone cameras as their primary technology. Their art is intimate and sometimes playful. It reveals their close attention to both the natural world and the built environment.

The students' photographs were shown on a video display in the High Street windows of the museum. The exhibition opened January 21 as part of that year's Community Day celebration and remained on view for several weeks after the museum building closed to the public.

Photographs and artist statements from “The View From Here” were featured on the museum's website and social media accounts. A subsequent display of the students' photography went on view at Yale West Campus starting April 29.

The program “The View From Here: Accessing Art Through Photography” was organized and taught by Paul Messier, Pritzker Director of the Lens Media Lab and chair of the Institute for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage, Yale University; Katherine “Kappy” Mintie, Senior Researcher in Art History, Lens Media Lab; and James Vanderberg, Educator, High School, College, University, and Community Outreach, YCBA; with Robert Hixon, Senior Imaging Systems Specialist, YCBA; and YCBA photographer Richard Caspole.

## *In a New Light: Paintings from the Yale Center for British Art*

MARCH 24 – DECEMBER 3, 2023

Shortly after the Yale Center for British Art closed for building conservation, more than fifty paintings from its collection went on view at the Yale University Art Gallery. *In a New Light: Paintings from the Yale Center for British Art* encompassed four centuries of British landscape and portraiture, with works by Mary Beale, John Constable, Thomas Gainsborough, William Hogarth, Gwen John, Angelica Kauffman, George Stubbs, and Joseph Mallord William Turner, among others. The paintings were displayed in the special-exhibition galleries on the fourth floor of the Gallery's Kahn building, which opened in 1953 and was the architect's first significant commission.

*In a New Light* was curated by Martina Droth, Deputy Director and Chief Curator, and Laurence Kanter, Chief Curator and the Lionel Goldfrank III Curator of European Art at the Yale University Art Gallery.

## PUBLICATION

### *The Idea of Italy: Photography and the British Imagination, 1840–1900*

This book examines the ways in which the new medium of photography influenced the British experience, appreciation, and perception of Italy in the nineteenth century. Setting photography within a long history of image making—beginning with the eighteenth-century Grand Tour and transformed by the inventions of William Henry Fox Talbot and Louis Daguerre—this beautifully illustrated book features many previously unpublished images alongside the work of well-known photographers. The sixteen essays in this volume explore photography as a vehicle for visual translation and cultural exchange.

Edited by Maria Antonella Pelizzari, professor of art history at Hunter College and the Graduate Center, City University of New York, and Scott Wilcox, Yale PhD 1984, former Deputy Director for Collections at the Yale Center for British Art. Published by the Yale Center for British Art, July 2022.