

TO BEGIN, AGAIN

A PREHISTORY OF THE WEX, 1968-89

Wexner Center for the Arts
February 5 - May 8, 2022

LEARNING GUIDE

Produced by the Department of Learning & Public Practice
Written and designed by Karin Flora, Julia Harth, and Liz Heise-Glass



Futura2000 creating *Untitled* (1984) for the exhibition *Writing on the Wall: Works in Progress* by New York City Graffiti Artists. The artist works in spray paint while a crowd looks on from the side. Image courtesy of The Ohio State University Archives.

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"Art is a serious matter, it operates in the society in many ways but perhaps its most important function is to examine, work through, regurgitate, and otherwise help us accept or reject the [ideas of] culture at any given time that press upon the whole."

-Jonathan Green [1]

HOW TO

Use this reference page to help you navigate the learning guide!

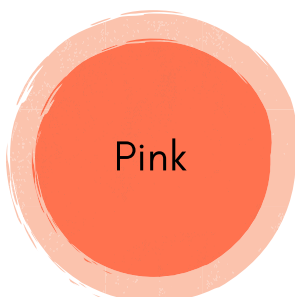
TIMELINE

As you explore the gallery spaces in the exhibition, use this learning guide to follow along. The guide uses a **timeline as an organizational framework**, with breakout sections that emphasize important stories, events, and figures. Rather than being comprehensive or strictly chronological, this timeline functions as a sort of **conceptual map of the gallery spaces**. The timeline sections relate to each of the galleries, indicated by the title at the top of the page, but feel free to explore in any order you like!

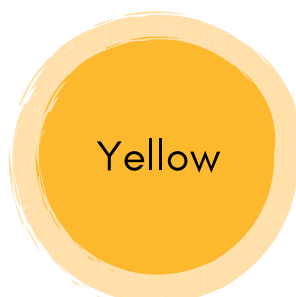
COLOR KEY

Throughout the learning guide, there are bolded and underlined green hyperlinks. Click on them to explore other websites with related information. Images framed or highlighted in green also link to sources. The **events** on the timeline are marked in blue. Be on the lookout for yellow **KEY TERMS** boxes too. Bold pink text indicates **questions for consideration**, which are opportunities to pause, reflect, and share your ideas with others! **Accessibility note:** While color is used to support an organizational system, it is not critical to use of the guide.

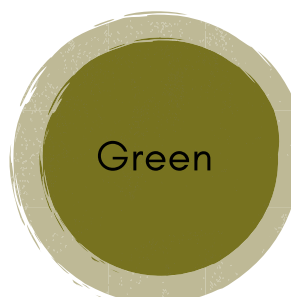
Questions



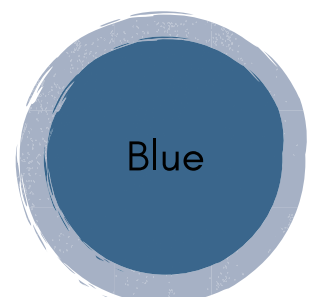
Key Terms



Links



Events



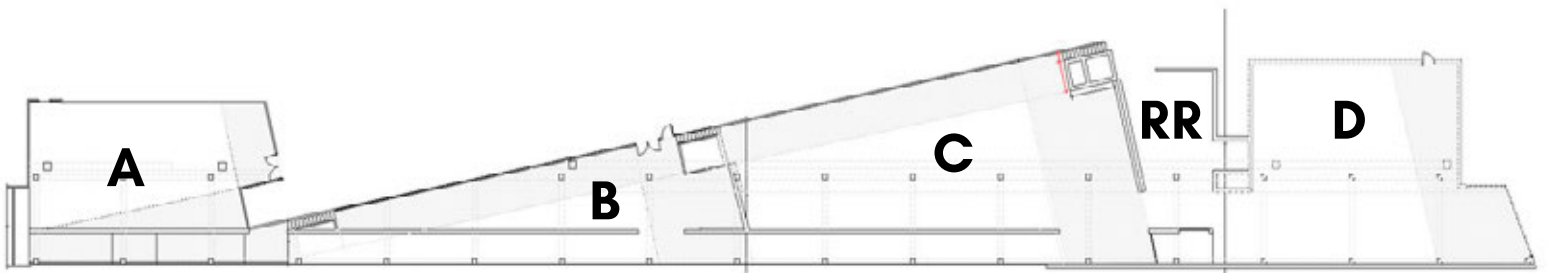
INTRODUCTION

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CONTEXT

The Vietnam War, Civil Rights movement, Kennedy's assassination—the 1960s and '70s were full of political and societal upheaval. Revolutionary scientific advances were accompanied by the blight of industrial pollution. In the face of injustices across the social spectrum, the illusion of the American Dream shattered. Artists stepped into the gap to present new methods of looking at and understanding the world, drawing attention to harsh realities. While the social movements that flowered in the 1960s and '70s moved American society towards a more inclusive future, this progress was also accompanied by a political and cultural backlash—a new brand of conservatism that dominated the 1980s. Artists responded once again, creating works that often speak directly to the lived experiences of those marginalized.

OHIO STATE

The 1970s saw the emergence of a contemporary art collection at Ohio State under the direction of University Gallery director Betty Collings. Gallery A and B reflect her work and concerns. The subsequent director, Jonathan Green, organized exhibitions that engaged with the political interests and countercultural movements of the 1980s, as seen in Gallery C, D, and the Reading Room (RR). In the late 1980s, Ohio State built upon this legacy of artistic experimentation by establishing the new Wexner Center for the Arts.



A birds-eye view of the gallery layout at the Wexner Center for the Arts. The entry gallery is labeled A, with names proceeding in alphabetical order up the ramp. The Reading Room (RR) is between C and D.

1955

The US enters into the Vietnam War. As the war wears on—the US's involvement would continue until 1975—it becomes increasingly unpopular among Americans at home thanks, in part, to news and images being broadcast on television and published in newspapers from the war.

1957

The Civil Rights Act of 1957—aimed to enforce equal access to voting—becomes law. It is the first major civil rights legislation to pass in Congress since the Reconstruction era.

1960

Ohio State has a curfew for women on campus. Many female students perceive this as university efforts to enforce outdated gender norms surrounding women's sexuality. Read: Students respond to the curfew.

1962

Ohio State student Mary Margaret Andrews is raped and killed. Her body is found a few meters off campus. Andrews's death leads the university to position off-campus areas as "unsafe."

1963

Martin Luther King, Jr. delivers his famed "I Have a Dream" speech at the March on Washington on August 23. The march includes over 200,000 people who congregate in Washington D.C. to march for equality.

Ohio State relocates the School of Art to Hopkins Hall and inaugurates the University Gallery of Fine Art.

Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale, co-founders of the Black Panther Party, lead Black students in Oakland, California in protests demanding the establishment of a Black Studies curriculum on their college campus. This action leads to similar movements at campuses around the country—including Ohio State. [2]

1963 (CONTINUED)

The Institute of Contemporary Art

is founded at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia to “expose students to what was ‘new and happening’ in art and culture.” [3]

1967

The Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago is established based on a kunsthalle model that offers temporary exhibitions of works by living artists. [5]

1968 (CONTINUED)

Strikes in France in May shut down the economy and spark a wave of student-led protests in other parts of Europe and the world. Ohio State's student newspaper, *The Lantern*, reports on the protests.

1969

The Stonewall Uprising erupts after a police raid of a gay bar in New York's Greenwich Village in June. The event sparks a series of confrontations with police and protests that help to spark the movement for LGBTQ rights in the US.

1964

Wright State, located in Dayton, Ohio, opens as part of the governor's commitment to ensuring a public institution of higher learning is present “within 30 miles of every Ohioan.” [4]

KUNSTHALLE

an art space that presents temporary exhibitions but does not maintain a permanent collection

1964-5

The Civil Rights Act of 1964

passes—aimed at guaranteeing equal employment, voter rights, and integration. The following year sees violent encounters between civil rights protestors and police forces.

1968

Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr. are assassinated.

Originally called The New Gallery, moCa Cleveland is founded to “showcase contemporary art and introduce it to Clevelanders.” [6]

GALLERY A

COLLECTION BEGINNINGS

Betty Collings served as Ohio State's first University Gallery director from 1975–80. [7] She organized their permanent collection and gained grants from the National Endowment for the Arts that enabled Ohio State to acquire cutting edge artworks by modern artists on a large scale for the first time. She sought to display multidisciplinary art which incorporated conceptual art and art of a documentary or realistic nature. These artworks conversed well with academic studies in the sciences and other disciplines, and interest in Ohio State's collections increased. [8]

When the world has been put in upheaval, and previous mindsets, worldviews, or perceived safety is shattered, how does one determine what is real and true? How did each of these artists interact with this question in their own way?



A poster of a fingerprint over a landscape for an exhibition of Dennis Oppenheim's work at The Kitchen in New York in 1975, featuring an image from *Identity Stretch*, 1970–1975.

Wexner Center Archives.

LAND ART

Dennis Oppenheim's *Identity Stretch* explores the concept of human impact on land, an early call to consider the geological footprint industry leaves behind. No longer content with the standard sculptural medium, Oppenheim turned to earthwork—art using land formations. He superimposed the fingerprints of himself and his son Erik onto a photograph of a map of Earl W. Brydges Artpark on a former industrial waste dump in Lewiston, NY. Then, trucks drove through and sprayed the landscape with hot tar, following the contours of the thumbprints. [9]

1969 (CONTINUED)

In July, Buzz Aldrin and Neil Armstrong become the first humans to touch down on the moon.

The Woodstock Music and Art Fair is held in upstate New York in August. Attended by over 400,000 people, Woodstock becomes a defining event of the 1960s counterculture.

A group of artists, museum staff, writers, and filmmakers in New York form the Art Workers' Coalition in an attempt to collectively organize and advocate for artists and art workers. Women Artists in Revolution (WAR) breaks off from the group shortly after its founding to focus specifically on issues facing women artists. [10]

COUNTERCULTURE
**any group that
defies the norms of
current society—be
those gender norms,
familial structures,
or other conventions**

1969

April 1 – Four sexual assaults occur within six days around OSU's campus, all occurring between 12:00 pm and 6:00 pm. [11]

April 7 – Afro-Am, a student group of Black students, stage a demonstration to advocate for more scholarships, lower fees, and increased Black student enrollment at Ohio State. Several protesting students are arrested and faced with criminal charges as a result of the demonstration.

STUDENT ACTIVISM AT OHIO STATE 1969-1970

'Black Teach-in' at Union

'Black Teach-in' headline above. Click on it to view the article!

October – Ohio State's College of Humanities establishes the Black Studies Division. In 1972, the Division achieves departmental status. Today it is known as the African American and African Studies Department. [12]

1970

April 29 – A large student assembly migrates across Ohio State's Columbus campus. The Highway Patrol comes to clear student protestors from the University entrance at 11th and Neil. The situation escalates, and the National Guard is deployed, firing tear gas and gunshots into the crowd to break up the demonstration. Some students are injured.

May 4 – The National Guard comes to quell related student protests on the Kent State campus. They open fire on unarmed student protesters leaving four dead and nine wounded. Ohio State imposes a curfew, and guards police four blocks around the campus. A few days later, Ohio State shuts down for two weeks. Students vote for a strike on May 6, 1970.

Women Against Rape (WAR), an anti-rape organization which provides a feminist space for women to talk about rape and sexual violence, is founded.

Ohio State establishes the Office of Affirmative Action and the Office of Minority Affairs, now called the Office of Diversity and Inclusion.



Newspaper image of the National Guard firing tear gas from April 30, 1970. Courtesy of The Ohio State University Archives. Click on the image above to view the articles!

1970 (CONT'D)

Curator Kynaston McShine mounts the Information exhibition featuring conceptual art at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

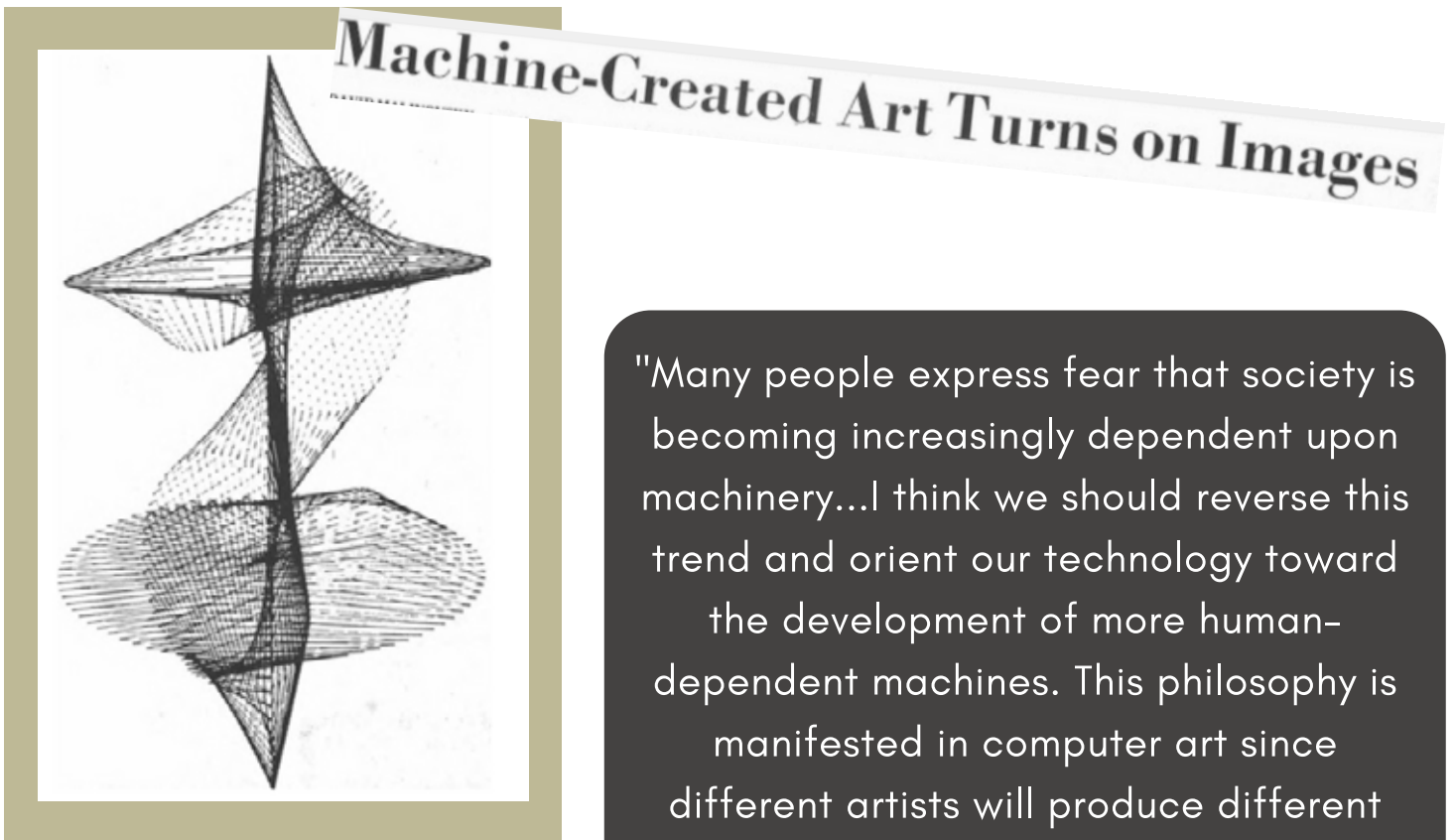
The US celebrates the first Earth Day.

Artist Judy Chicago establishes the Feminist Art Program at Fresno State University, a land-grant university in central California.

GALLERY A

COMPUTER ART

The Hopkins Fine Arts Gallery put on an exhibition which was on display the week the National Guard came. The exhibition featured the work of Charles Csuri, professor of art at Ohio State, who created computer generated images at the forefront of digital art. He characterized his art as capturing human-machine interaction in "real time," a step towards developing "human-dependent machines." Charles Csuri's *Flies* (1967-68) computer graphic print illustrates the sense of technological progress and hope arising amid the conflict and tension of its time. [13]



A newspaper clipping of computer spiral art from *The Lantern* titled "Machine-Created Art Turns on Images," May 1, 1970. Image courtesy of The Ohio State University Archives. Click on the image to view the full article!

"Many people express fear that society is becoming increasingly dependent upon machinery...I think we should reverse this trend and orient our technology toward the development of more human-dependent machines. This philosophy is manifested in computer art since different artists will produce different relationships between images."

-Charles Csuri [13]

GALLERY A

STUDENT REFLECTIONS

During this time of turbulence, an MFA student at Ohio State, Michael Keyes, created screen-prints from several photographs of the student uprisings to commemorate them. Amidst the instability and large-scale activism, art became a necessary outlet to process current events. Michael Keyes used his art to present campus reality as he experienced it, memorializing it.

How would you portray the realities of the pandemic and social conflict from your own experience?



Michael J. Keyes, *Oval, Thursday Noon, April 30, 1970*, 1971. Screen print, 30 1/4 x 21 1/4 in. Collection of the artist. Image of a student facing the National Guard line on Ohio State campus green.

In 2020, Ohio State experienced another monumental university shutdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The year 2020 similarly saw graduate student protests of working conditions on campus, protests in May in downtown Columbus around police violence against African Americans, and societal turmoil surrounding health concerns and inequalities.

How can we compare the societal upheaval and controversies of the 1960's and '70s to the societal polarization and controversies of the current era? What factors seem to contribute to the escalation of conflict? What has changed since 1970?

1972

Members of Women's Liberation, a feminist activist group on campus, and the Gay Activists Alliance join one of Ohio State's Bridal Fair fashion shows in protest.

United Graffiti Artists

(UGA), the earliest organized group of graffiti writers, is founded in New York City by Hugo Martinez.

Congress approves the **Equal Rights Amendment** (ERA) as an amendment to the Constitution. Even though the ERA is passed by Congress, it is never ratified.

1973

Ohio State holds an interdisciplinary arts symposium headlined by artist Robert Smithson and featuring critic Annette Michelson, the Chicano farmworker theater collective **El Teatro Campesino**, and choreographer Viola Farber, among others.

The US Supreme Court hands down its decision on *Roe v. Wade*, striking down existing federal and state laws that had previously limited abortion access.

Ohio State establishes the Office of Women's Studies. As **Professor Mildred Munday recalled a decade later**, the movement for a women's studies program at the University began during the protests of 1970. The establishment of the Office of Women's Studies becomes an academic department in 1996. In 2010, the department is renamed the **Department of Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies**.

1974

The **Watergate** scandal comes to a head, and Congress votes to impeach President Nixon. He resigns from office and is replaced by Gerald Ford.

After nearly two decades, the Paris Peace Accords ends American involvement in the Vietnam War.

1977

WAR leads a protest on campus in response to the rape of a lesbian student. The march is the largest student protest since the University's 1970 shut down.

GALLERY B

BETTY COLLINGS

Betty Collings launched an acclaimed program of contemporary exhibitions in the University Gallery in 1975. As director, Betty Collings aimed the programming of the University Gallery to overlap with the academic mission of the University, but she was also interested in presenting diverse artists and ideas to the campus and local community. In Gallery B, we see some of the ways in which Collings's program at the Gallery intersects—both directly and indirectly—with political movements and cultural developments taking place throughout the nation. As Collings shaped the Gallery's program, she thought about what was already being taught and seen on campus—and, importantly, what was not. In a [1978 article from *The Lantern*](#), she explained her thought process behind choosing artists to show at the Gallery:

"What effect will this have for our students and faculty in the College of the Arts? Will it be stimulating?" [14]



Betty Collings, *Dance*, 1975–76. Vinyl, approximately 48 x 480 x 48 in. Courtesy of the artist. A white inflated sculpture stretching horizontally inside an enclosed architectural space.

During her time as the director of the University Gallery, Collings also continued to work as an artist herself. With a studio in the old [Weisheimer Mill on King Avenue in Columbus](#), Collings created sculptures inspired by natural geometries. Her sculpture *Dance* (1975–76) is an inflatable work exploring the spiral, a geometric form that is the foundation of much organic life on earth. **Looking around Gallery B, how can we see Collings's interest in diversity in the works on view? What subjects, subjectivities, and mediums can we identify at play in this group of artworks?**

GALLERY B

ROBERT STULL

In 1969, Ohio State established the Black Studies Division in response to student activism around equality and access for Black students at the University. Artist Robert Stull studied at Ohio State as an undergraduate and graduate student in art before he joined the faculty in Black Studies in the early 1970s.

Trained as a ceramicist, Stull was already teaching in a university setting when he began constructing his own visual vocabulary to respond to and express a contemporary Black American experience. In a [1973 interview](#) for WOSU's "Black Studies Broadcast Journal," Stull explained:

"I began to try to identify within the framework of a Black experience in this country symbols which would be unique to our experience ... I began to search for some forms that could be used, that Black people could identify with." [15]



Robert J. Stull, *Songhai*, 1978. Mixed media, 96 x 60 in. Frank W. Hale, Jr. Black Cultural Center / Office of Diversity and Inclusion, The Ohio State University. A shaped canvas with a triangular base and circular top, colorfully decorated with geometric patterns.

Stull's work *Songhai* is an abstract painting on a shaped canvas. Its title refers to the [Songhai empire](#), which flourished in West Africa in the 15th and 16th centuries. This work is an exploration of images and symbols drawn from African art.

Consider the visual elements that Stull employs to reference the Black experience. Do other artists in the exhibition create their own "visual vocabularies"? What other experiences do these artists refer to?

GALLERY B

JOAN BROWN

Pass the towel



Joan Brown, *Woman Preparing for a Shower*, 1975. Enamel on canvas, 84 x 72 in. Di Rosa Center for Contemporary Art, Napa, CA. A painting of a woman and a dog in a bright blue tiled shower.

San Francisco painter Joan Brown exhibited work at the University Gallery in 1978. Her exhibition in Sullivant Hall included this 1975 painting of an everyday scene: a woman in a vibrant blue tiled shower preparing to bathe. This striking, somewhat strange image was even featured in the on-campus newspaper, *The Lantern*, during the exhibition's run. Brown's awkwardly frozen figure is accompanied by a small dog that stands on its hind legs, holding a towel in its mouth as though waiting for the woman to take it. This painting is an excellent example of Brown's figurative work of the time—a moment in which animals and other symbols became central elements of her work.

Brown is an artist often associated with the *Bay Area Funk* movement and the *Beat Generation*, but her work also parallels issues raised in feminist art—even if Brown did not claim such an association for her work. By centering female figures and scenes from everyday life in her work, Brown explores her own life and the lives of other women like her. While she distanced herself from politics in her own statements about her work, Brown's paintings of women—figures that are often read as self-portraits of the artist—can be read as visual examples of the feminist credo: "The personal is political."

What associations or ideas does Brown's painting bring to mind? How is this portrayal of a contemporary woman different than those in classical art?

1979

In support of the ongoing Islamic Revolution in Iran, a group of Iranian students seize control of the US embassy in Tehran, holding its American staff captive. The Iran hostage crisis lasts over a year.

ANTI-IMPERIALISM
opposition to colonial expansion; popular criticism of American military occupation

1980

Ronald Reagan is elected President of the United States. In his two terms in office, Reagan promotes conservative economic policies. While the relationship between the US and the Soviet Union arguably improves during his tenure, Reagan also increases international military interventions, many in the name of anti-communism. [16]

KITSCH
thought to be in bad taste; tacky; common or 'low'; sometimes ironically appreciated

1982

Kitsch exhibition occurs at the University Gallery.

The global economic recession of the early 1980s hits its low. [17] The period of high inflation and unemployment later leads to a debt crisis in Latin America.

1983

Lucy Lippard curates *Alls Fair: Love and War in New Feminist Art* at the University Gallery.

STREET ART
public artwork, such as graffiti or murals; can contain social or political messages

1984

University Gallery director Jonathan Green invites prominent New York graffiti artists—Futura2000, Zephyr, and ERO—to visit Ohio State. The artists give a live demonstration in Sullivant Hall, separated from the audience to protect from the spray paint chemicals. Green purchases the work created by Futura2000 for the university's collection.

GALLERY C

WRITING ON THE WALL

In 1984, Mary Albrecht, a student from the Photography and Cinema department, produced a video about the graffiti exhibition *Writing on the Wall*. Albrecht, using the stage name Mary Danger, interviewed the artists at work as well as some of the visit's organizers, such as Patti Astor of [Fun Gallery](#).

A newspaper clipping from *The Lantern* titled "Graffiti art covers Sherman Gallery," February 1, 1984. Click on the image to view the full article!

Graffiti art covers Sherman Gallery

By Julie A. Hall
Lantern arts reporter 2-1-84

Promptly at 7 p.m. Monday the doors opened, loud soul music was blasting through the gallery, and by looking through a glass and plastic partition, three artists could be seen spray painting the walls in Sullivan Hall.

ERO (Dominique Philbert), Futura 2000 (Leonard McGurr), and Zephyr (Andrew Witten) delighted an audience of about 500 as they turned white canvas walls into colorful graffiti paintings Monday night.

The gallery was extremely overcrowded because the artists needed to be separated from the audience by a plastic and glass wall which left very little room for viewing.

Barbara Kendrick, curator of the exhibit, explained that the partition was needed so the fumes from the paint would not harm the audience. The artists were protected from the fumes by facial filters.

There was a variety of people at the installation and everyone seemed to have his own opinion of the exhibit.

"Art should be an event where everyone can participate; there is an immediacy to it," said Philip Drube, a graduate student from Toledo.

"This reminds me of the subways in New York. You see whole cars painted like this," said Robert Daniels, a junior from Cayahoga Falls.

Before the exhibit, someone had spray painted "Welcome Artists" on the Sullivan Hall pillars. Jim Yunker of OSU Police said, "If I had seen someone do that I would have had to arrest them."

Clothed in jeans and sweatshirts, all of the artists had about thirty cans of paint to spray their design with.

Zephyr began painting a skyline in gray and at the top in royal blue letters he wrote "REBELS." At the bottom in huge letters was his title in New York — King-Zephyr.

Patti Astor, owner of the Fun Gallery in New York where these artists work, explained that Zephyr got this title during the "Golden Age of Graffiti," which was 1978-79, because he had painted more trains than any other artist.

ERO's style was not as defined as Zephyr's and had many fat curves and circles in vivid blue, green and yellow.

Futura 2000 had the most abstract design of the three as almost every color was sporadically sprayed over the canvas with his name throughout the design.

Astor conducted a short lecture about graffiti art while the artists continued painting.

Astor explained that New York City Police and Transit Authority workers hate graffiti and the artists run great risks if they are caught. She estimated that there are currently 10,000 people who are actively writing graffiti.

New York City Mayor Edward Koch has implemented a \$0.5 million program to discourage graffiti, but Astor thinks that Koch should accept it, because the program is having adverse effects. She said that since the people are fearful of being arrested, they will just spray their name. This is not as pretty as the old trains, she said.

Several years ago graffiti writers would sneak into the train yards and spend anywhere from two to nine hours spraying one 40-foot train. They would also use up to 80 cans of paint.

"I used to get arrested. If they caught you they would put the handcuffs on and take you away," said ERO. "But now I get paid for this."

The exhibit is open to the public and on display daily until Feb. 10.

KITSCH

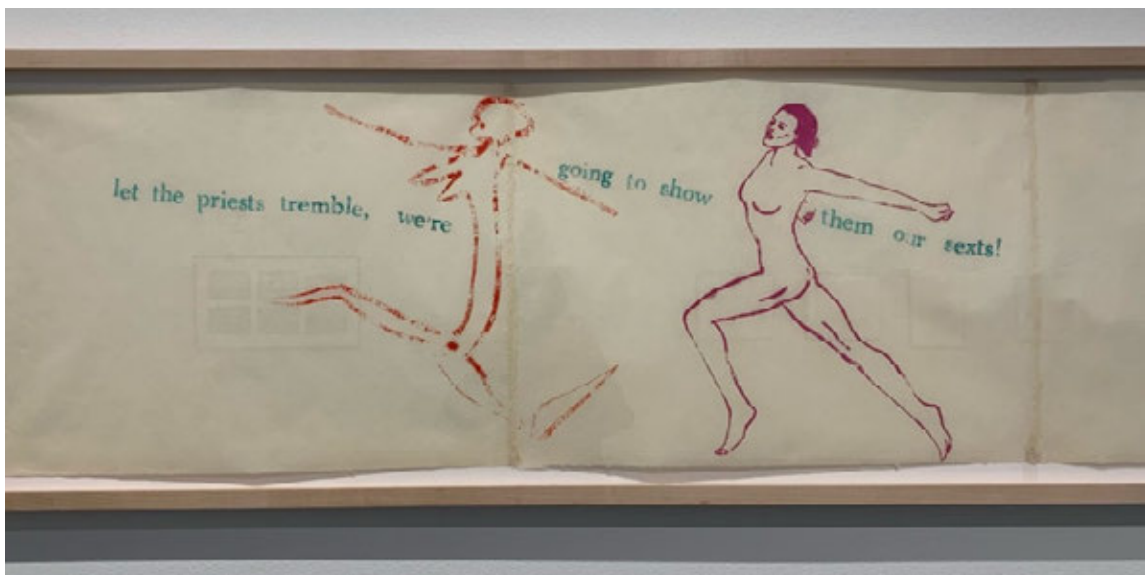
In addition to *Writing on the Wall*, the video on display in the gallery includes Albrecht and Irene Richard's documentation of a 1982 exhibition titled [Kitsch](#). To create this exhibition, community members shared personal objects, ones that might otherwise be considered "junk," for formal display in the gallery. By positioning these everyday items as fine art, gallery director Jonathan Green invited viewers to consider the definition of art, as well as social constructions of value and class. Occurring in a period of economic crisis, *Kitsch* tapped into concerns about inflation and a growing wealth divide. The participatory nature of the exhibition also helped to democratize the gallery space, inviting collaboration and sharing power with the audience. **In what ways can a shift in authority benefit a community institution? What challenges might this change present? If you had the opportunity to share an object from your home in an art museum or gallery, what would it be?**

GALLERY C

NANCY SPERO

Like Betty Collings's *Dance*, Nancy Spero's *Let the Priests Tremble* employs movement as a symbolic vehicle. Spero, born in Cleveland, Ohio in 1926, centers feminist and anti-war messages in her works on paper. [18] While she identifies the body as a site of violence against women, her graphic depictions assert a feminist power. By incorporating imagery from different sources, including classical mythology and contemporary media, Spero creates a unique iconography that challenges historical narratives about gender and war. [19] Consider some of the other art in this gallery space, such as Rudolf Baranik's *Napalm Elegy I* or Gary and Matt Bower's *Theories of War: Civil Defense*. **How does Spero's art relate to these works? What commentary about conflict and war do you notice?**

As you explore other gallery spaces, consider how Spero's work might relate to Eva Hesse's *Area* and the artwork from the 1985 exhibition *RAPE*. **What are some of the unifying themes? What is the role of the body? How do the artists address gender and sexuality?**



Nancy Spero, *Let The Priests Tremble*, 1982. Ink stencil on paper. Installation image from *To Begin, Again: A Prehistory of the Wex, 1968-1989* (2022) exhibition. A detail from one of three panels in the work. Two nude women, outlined in orange and pink, leap with arms and legs outstretched. Blue-green text around the figures reads: "let the priests tremble, we're going to show them our sexts!"

READING ROOM

CONTENT WARNING

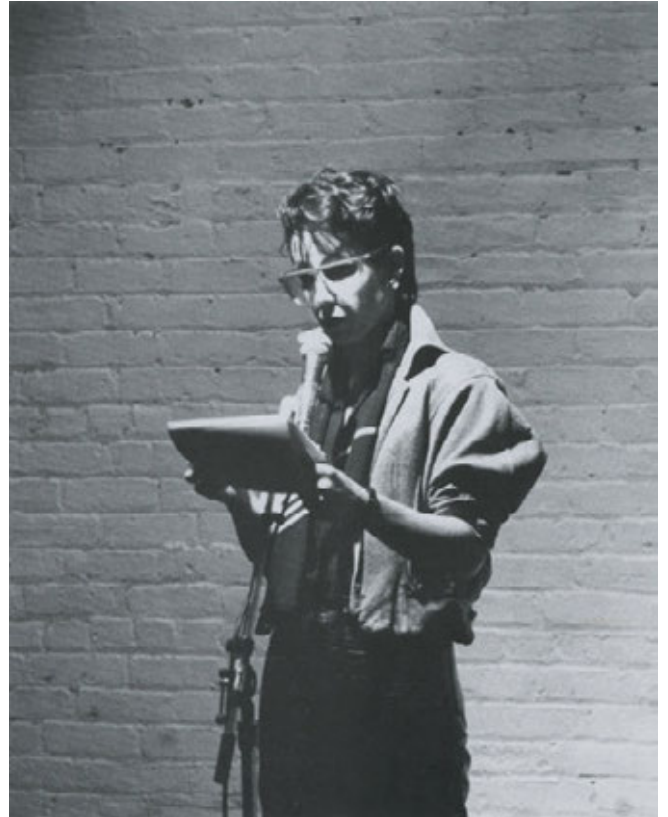
The following content in this section addresses issues of sexual violence. We encourage you to care for yourself while regarding this material; for more information regarding coping with triggers see this [site](#). Resources for survivors of sexual violence are on page 31.

RAPE CULTURE

a society or environment whose prevailing social attitudes have the effect of normalizing or trivializing sexual assault and abuse. [20]

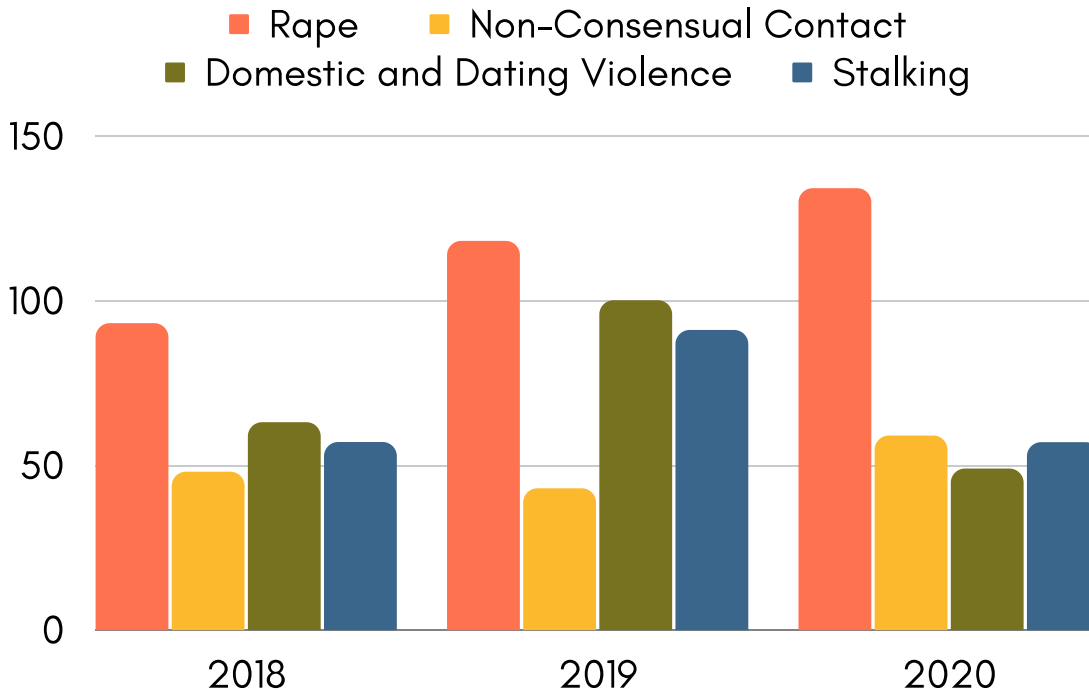
JERRI ALLYN

Jerri Allyn performed her piece *Raw Meet* from 1983 on the opening night of the *RAPE* exhibition in 1985, recounting conversations with male co-workers. [21] Her work challenges norms of sexually harassing comments which contribute to culture that minimizes and justifies rape. Her catalogue statement from the 1985 *RAPE* exhibition explains that her work is about people trying to navigate love and sex, yet it also touches on sexual abuse as a topic of importance to her. She discusses societal refusal to face the realities of rape's impact on its most vulnerable citizens as comparable to its unwillingness to face cultural injustices: "I am convinced this society turns its back on the rape of our land and the Third World, a name that in itself is a refusal to see 'them' in 'our' world." [22]



Photograph of Jerri Allyn performing *Raw Meet*, 1985. Image courtesy of the *RAPE* catalogue. Holding a pad of paper, Jerri Allyn speaks into a microphone. She stands in front of a painted brick wall.

READING ROOM



CAMPUS REPORT

Data from page 58-9 of The Ohio State University's [2021 Annual Security Report](#) indicates an increase in reported rapes on campus since 2018. Click the image to see a news article discussing these statistics.

Do these facts surprise you? This data reflects only reported incidences, leaving many acts of sexual violence invisible statistically. What factors might contribute to the lack of improvement of incidences of rape on college campuses between 1985 and now? What steps can we take to improve this reality?

ANN FESSLER

Ann was a student at Ohio State when the campus [riots broke out in 1970](#). She was personally impacted by the riots and police presence when a friend of hers was hospitalized; the politically charged atmosphere inspired her to address pressing societal issues with her art. Her piece *Rape: A Crime Report* was first displayed at the [Washington Project for the Arts](#) a few blocks from the Capitol Mall. It was then shown here as part of the *RAPE* exhibition hosted by Ohio State in 1985 before the exhibition toured nationally for two years. [23] She weaved together the personal accounts of several rape survivors to create one cohesive narrative for this work. This installation has been updated to reflect current statistics regarding rape, pulling from recent campus survey data, including that of Ohio State. [24]

READING ROOM

MATERIAL AND MEANING

Fessler uses cotton organdy panels printed with blue letters using **cyanotype printing**—an image imprinted photographically onto an application of photo-sensitive chemicals which later wash off. The panels are meant to evoke both a book, telling a story, and bedsheets, as most rapes occur within a residence. She also uses cotton organdy for its translucent properties, which enables a small glimpse into the next panels. The cyanotype text imprints the words into the fabric of the material, printing them indelibly into their fibers. Unlike ink, the cyanotype text will not wash off, reflecting the life-altering impact of such events. The maze-like structure of her work invites viewers to peruse the topic, delving ever deeper into their realities, while also representing the disorienting journey of rape itself. [25]



Ann Fessler, *Rape: A Crime Report*, 1984/2021. 11 cotton organdy panels with cyanotype printed text, 1 blank text panel, and projected text, dimensions variable. Courtesy of the artist.

Image shows cotton panels with imprinted text containing facts and myths about rape.

AIDS IN AMERICA

1981-1989

1982

The term AIDS—acquired immunodeficiency syndrome—is used to describe this emergent disease.

In New York, the non-profit organization Gay Men's Health Crisis is founded to raise money and awareness around the epidemic.

1986

President Ronald Reagan makes his first public mention of AIDS in a speech to Congress. During this single year, over 16,000 Americans die of AIDS.

1989

In February, the exhibition *AIDS: The Artists' Response* opens at the University Gallery.

AIDS quilt brought to Columbus;
50 central Ohioan's names added

1989 (CONTINUED)

In March, the AIDS Memorial Quilt is brought to Ohio State and displayed at the Woody Hayes Athletic Center. The names of those memorialized on the quilt are read aloud at a ceremony unveiling the quilt in Columbus. *Video Against AIDS*, a program of short video works made in response to the epidemic, is presented by the new Wexner Center for the Arts in November.

1981

A small group of young, gay men in Los Angeles display shared symptoms and infections. In July, the CDC reports of cases of Kaposi sarcoma seen among the gay male population.

1983

Researchers identify a retrovirus—HIV—that is later confirmed as the cause of AIDS.

1985

The first HIV diagnostic test is approved by the FDA. By the end of 1985, over 13,000 Americans with AIDS have died.

1987

AZT becomes the first available drug approved by the FDA to fight HIV.

The political action group ACT UP is founded in New York. AIDS activists in San Francisco begin the AIDS Memorial Quilt.

1985

The exhibition *RAPE* opens at the University Gallery. Organized by Stephanie K. Blackwood, the exhibition includes works gathered through an open call and juried by author Susan Brownmiller and artists Jenny Holzer and Barbara Kruger. As Blackwood notes in the exhibition's catalogue:

"[The University Gallery] is guided by a belief that exhibitions should provide a forum for exploring art as personal, political and social commentary on the human condition. This daring posture was the genesis of *RAPE*."

THIRD-WAVE FEMINISM

Feminism in the 1980s and '90s that engaged actively with issues of class and race, concerns seen as neglected by previous waves of feminism.

[26]

The List Visual Arts Center is founded at MIT.

The Hood Museum of Art is established at Dartmouth College.

1988

George Herbert Walker Bush is elected President of the US.

1989

After over seven weeks of action in Beijing's historic Tiananmen Square, Chinese student protestors are met with assault rifles and tanks.

At Ohio State, the Wexner Center for the Arts opens on the old site of the Armory building.

1989 (CONTINUED)

The Berlin Wall, which had separated East and West Berlin following World War II, is dismantled. The event marks a symbolic fall of the Iron Curtain and end to the Cold War.

GALLERY D

ADRIAN PIPER

Adrian Piper's *Four Intruders Plus Alarm Systems* is an artwork that surrounds the viewer. Entering Piper's darkened, spiral-shaped room, viewers encounter images of four Black male faces hanging on the work's interior walls. Lights behind the images make these portraits strange, as light emanates from each subject's eyes. As [The Lantern described in 1984](#): "[Piper's work] makes a statement about racism ... Under [each photograph] is a set of stereo headphones that broadcast various racist comments that seem to be thoughtless reactions to the photographs." [27]

Piper's aim with *Four Intruders* is to speak to entrenched stereotypes about Black masculinity in American culture. As the audio recordings and our own responses to this confrontation with these images of Black men reinforce, Black men in America have long been viewed with suspicion, seen as dangerous, and assumed to be criminals. This stereotype, which can be traced back all the way to the post-Reconstruction era if not before, persists in today's culture as well. **What does being inside Piper's work make us feel? What connections can we draw between Piper's work and current events and political protest in the US in the past decade? How do these sorts of stereotypes impact the lives of Black people in the US?**



Adrian Piper, *Four Intruders Plus Alarm Systems*, 1980. Wood, lightbox photographs, audiotapes, headsets, and music soundtrack, 84 x 71 in. diameter. Collection of The Ohio State University, courtesy of the Wexner Center for the Arts. Purchased with assistance from the National Endowment for the Arts. A view of the exterior of a black, cylindrical enclosure inside a gallery space.

GALLERY D

EVA HESSE

American artist Eva Hesse is well-known for her sculptures made in experimental materials. When many of her male colleagues in New York were using industrial materials like aluminum, fiberglass, wood, or steel, Hesse gravitated towards materials like latex rubber, resin, string, and cloth. These materials are more prone to discoloration, warping, and other types of change than the building-grade materials her colleagues used. As a result, even though Hesse's work is often considered part of the post-minimalist movement, her objects have a more delicate appearance that is often read as relating to the human body and its ephemerality. These relations are made even more potent when one considers Hesse's objects in relationship to her own biography: Hesse died at the age of 34 from a brain tumor, cutting both her life and her artistic career tragically short.

Hesse's sculpture *Area* has been a highlight of the Wexner Center collection since the time of its acquisition and was shown numerous times both at the Wexner Center and at other institutions in celebration of Hesse's practice. In *To Begin, Again*, Hesse's prone sculpture is dislocated from the timeline; instead of being presented with other works made around the same time, *Area* is being shown alongside artworks that relate, at a central level, to the human body. **How does Hesse's sculpture make you feel? What does it make you think about—what associations or assumptions might we make about it in the context of what we see around it?**



Eva Hesse, *Area*, 1968. Rubber latex on mesh and wire, 50 x 129 x 36 in. Collection of The Ohio State University, courtesy of the Wexner Center for the Arts. A sculpture rests against the wall with part of it stretching across the floor.

GALLERY D

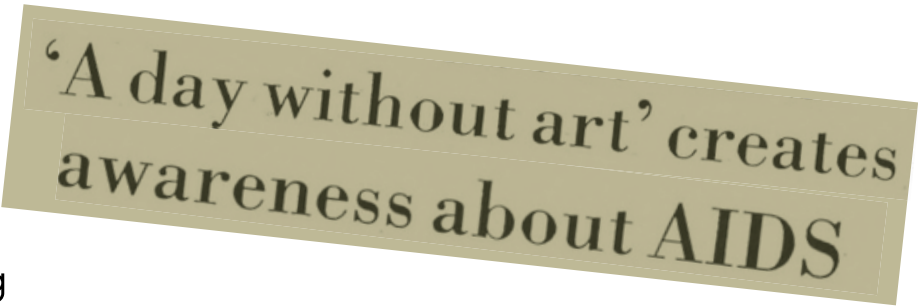
VIDEO AGAINST AIDS

To Begin, Again includes four video works that were featured in 1989's *Video Against AIDS* film program shown at the new Wexner Center in November. Organized by media curator Bill Horrigan (who still holds a position with the Wexner Center as Curator-at-Large) and Canadian artist John Greyson, the film program followed the February exhibition *AIDS: The Artists' Response*, shown at the University's Sherman Gallery.

The program also coincided with "[A Day Without Art: A National Day of Action and Mourning in Response to the AIDS Crisis](#)," initiated by the New York-based organization [Visual AIDS](#). This trio of events all responded to the AIDS crisis and the activist responses that it garnered. As *The Lantern* reported about *Video Against AIDS*, "Horrigan said that his impatience with the narrow range of AIDS information in the media motivated him to make 'Video Against AIDS.' [The video program] shows 'unpopular' ideas that the mass media often chooses to ignore, he said. 'It presents enlightened, non-homophobic AIDS education critical of the FDA.'" [28] Most of all, the program aims to represent people with AIDS—sometimes abbreviated as PWAs—to both humanize the disease and dispel misconceptions about its victims and impacts.

The associations that were made early on between the AIDS epidemic and the gay community lead to devastating

results with politicians, doctors, and even the families of PWAs hesitant to treat the epidemic and its victims due to unchecked homophobia. **What ramifications do biases about a group of people have in determining how those people are treated, and in how we deal with public health problems? Can we think of parallels between these issues surrounding AIDS and those surrounding the current COVID-19 pandemic?**



'A day without art' creates awareness about AIDS

GALLERY D

BARBARA HAMMER

Barbara Hammer's video *Snow Job: The Media Hysteria of AIDS* (1986) offers a visual collage of sound and images that look at the misinformation, fear tactics, and biases used in American media surrounding AIDS, the people who contracted the disease, and the government's insufficient action in response. Presenting snippets of broadcasts and headlines, Hammer's piece asks us to think about the biases between a presumed point of origin—in this case, the gay male community—and a disease.

ISAAC JULIEN

British artist Isaac Julien similarly works against these prejudices with his video *This is not an AIDS advertisement* (1988), which depicts romantic love between gay men and depicts male bodies as objects of desire. In the second portion of Julien's video, the soundtrack and text on the screen reiterate the underlying message of the title: "This is not an AIDS advertisement. Feel no shame in your desire." Here, Julien fights against the impulse to equate a gay male identity with AIDS.



Barbara Hammer, still from *Snow Job: The Media Hysteria of AIDS*, 1986. Video: color and sound, 7:42 mins. Courtesy of Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI), New York. An image of a blue screen dotted with white snow and the text "AIDS tattoo" in the center.



Isaac Julien, *This is Not an AIDS Advertisement*, 1988. Video: color, 10 mins. Courtesy of Frameline, San Francisco. A collaged image with pink text and figures.

PLAYLIST

Check out these multimedia activities that relate to the exhibition!

MUSIC



Listen to "[The Escapades Rap](#)", which features Futura2000 with The Clash. In the early 1980s, Futura2000 worked with the rock band, creating posters for the Radio Clash tour and painting onstage during concerts. [29]

ARCHIVES



Curious about the history of The Ohio State University from 1968 to 1989? Explore a [timeline](#) from the University Archives, which details important events, academic developments, and figures from Ohio State's past.

STREET ART



Use the [Google Arts & Culture](#) app to explore [street art](#) from around the world. You can also filter by a particular artist, such as [Futura2000](#). If you have access to tablet or computer, you can create and share your own "street art" with this [tool](#) from the [Tate](#).

VOICES & STORIES



[The Carmen Collection](#) highlights voices from Ohio State's history. Read firsthand responses to featured events below. You can also explore the collection (and sort by decade) to find more stories.

- [student response to the crisis in Iran](#)
- [history of LGBTQ activism on campus](#)
- [origin of the Women's Studies program](#)
- the formation of the [Black student newspaper Our Choking Times](#)

PLAYLIST

Check out these multimedia activities that relate to the exhibition!

RADIO



Listen to clips from the [**Black Studies Broadcast Journal**](#), a radio program that aired in the 1970s on [**WOSU**](#), the Ohio State radio station.

VIDEO



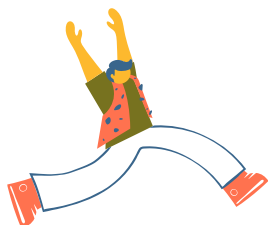
In 1989, WOSU's art program *d'ART* covered the exhibition *AIDS: The Artists' Response*. View the video through [**the station's archives**](#). As part of the exhibition, the AIDS Memorial Quilt traveled to Columbus. Watch an [**interview with Cleve Jones**](#) to learn more about the quilt project.

ACTIVISM



The student-led project [**Reclaiming Our Histories**](#) traces feminist activism at Ohio State. Explore the collections, writings, and clippings compiled by the research team.

DANCE



Betty Collings's *Dance* and Nancy Spero's *Let the Priests Tremble* are two works in the exhibition that feature movement as a key theme. Consider a [**history of dance at Ohio State**](#) in connection with this art.

BIOGRAPHY



The 1985 exhibition *RAPE* was “dedicated to the memory of Ana Mendieta, whose unexpected death on September 8, 1985 underscores the violence in our society.” [30] The film *Fuego de Tierra* details Mendieta’s life and legacy. Read an [**interview with the directors**](#) or watch the [**documentary**](#) through the [**Met’s archives**](#).

PLAYLIST

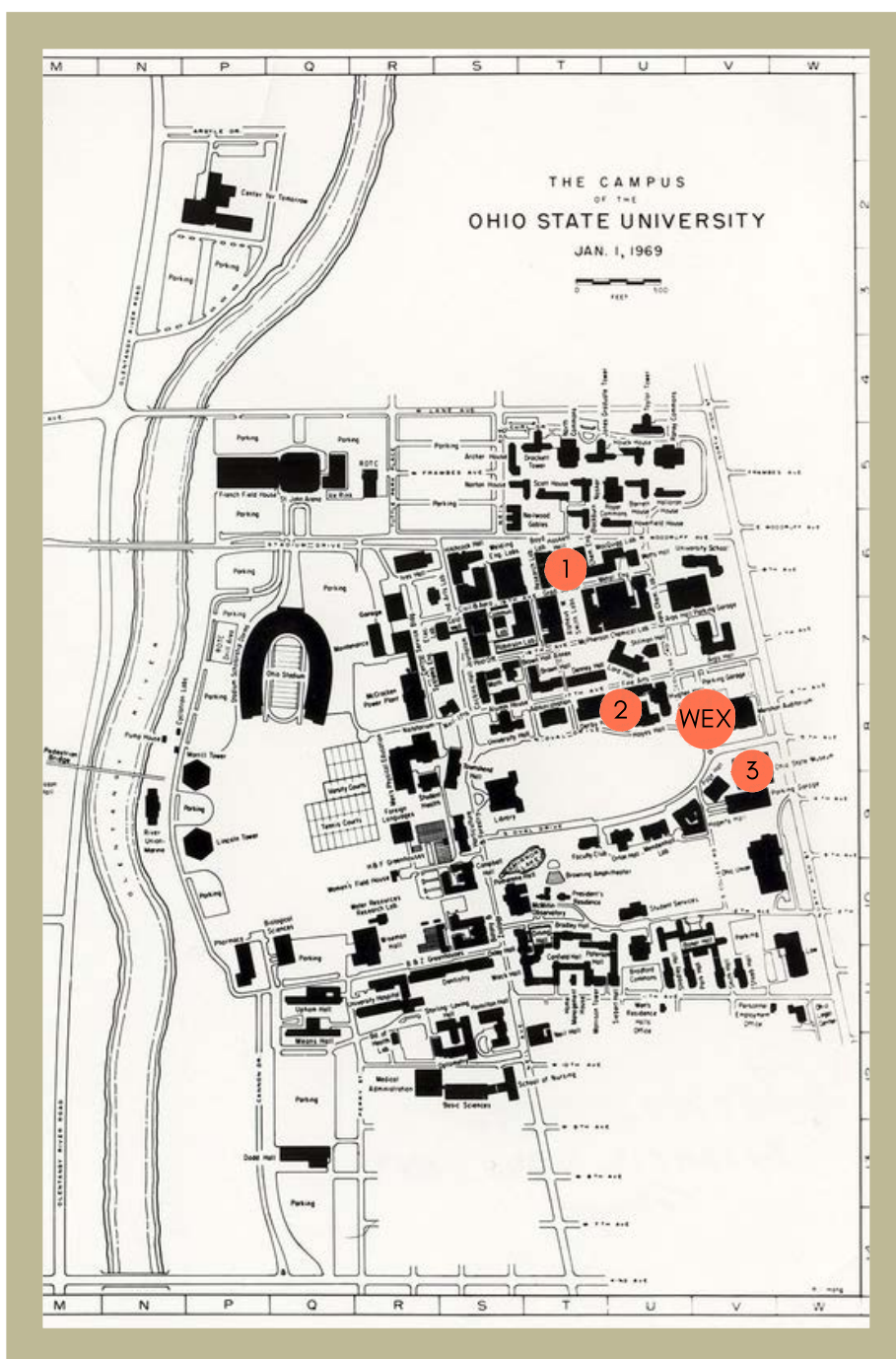
Check out these multimedia activities that relate to the exhibition!

CAMPUS MAP

Have you visited the sites on campus referenced in this exhibition? [Sullivant Hall](#), which included the Sherman Gallery, and [Hopkins Hall](#) were both home to the University Gallery. [Haskett Hall](#), which was located at 156 W 19th Ave, housed the Department of Photography and Cinema. [31]

- 1 Haskett Hall
- 2 Hopkins Hall
- 3 Sullivant Hall

A map of The Ohio State University campus from 1969. Courtesy of The Ohio State University Archives. Click on the image to see the full details. You can also explore the album of archival campus maps!



COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Many of the issues and themes addressed by the artists in this exhibition are relevant today. Please consider this list of community resources to find further information or support ongoing initiatives.

ON CAMPUS

- **Hale Black Cultural Center** – academic building and community space; home to student organizations and the Hale Center Art Collection
 - **BYMOC Collective** – Boys and Young Men of Color Collective; advocates for policy change
 - **The Women's Place** – campus organization dedicated to institutional gender equality
 - **Bell National Resource Center on the African American Male** – program supporting the retention and graduation of African American men
-
- **Crisis Text Line** – free, confidential counseling and referrals via online chat and text message; text “HOME” to 741-741
 - **Netcare Access Crisis Hotline** at 614-276-CARE (2273) – provides mental health and substance abuse crisis intervention
 - **SARNCO** (Sexual Assault Response Network of Central Ohio) at 614-267-7020 – confidential support and advocacy services for survivors; on campus branch at 33 W 11th Ave and 614-688-2518
 - **Office of Institutional Equity** – submit an official report regarding harassment, discrimination, and sexual misconduct
 - **Counseling and Consultation Service** – mental health resources and medical referrals provided by the Office of Student Life
 - **Ohio State: Wellness** – an app for connecting with student-centered health and wellness resources
 - **Department of Public Safety** at 614-292-2121 (non-emergency)

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Many of the issues and themes addressed by the artists in this exhibition are relevant today. Please consider this list of community resources to find further information or support ongoing initiatives.

COLUMBUS & OHIO

- [**Stonewall**](#) - LGBTQ+ community organization; advocates for inclusion and leads local initiatives, such as [**Lavender Listings**](#) and [**Columbus Pride**](#)
- [**Kaleidoscope**](#) - community center for LGBTQ+ youth; offers personal support and educational resources
- [**Equitas Health**](#) - non-profit health center with a focus on LGBTQ+ and HIV/AIDS patients
- [**Mozaic**](#) - HIV prevention program from Equitas Health
- [**Out of the Closet**](#) - local thrift store benefiting the AIDS Healthcare Foundation; offers free HIV testing
- [**Don't Call the Police**](#) - alternative resources for assistance in a crisis
- [**BRAVO**](#) - Buckeye Region Anti-Violence Organization; provides LGBTQ+ survivor advocacy and support
- [**King Arts Complex**](#) - community arts organization with a focus on African American culture and history
- [**Maroon Arts Group**](#) - a non-profit, creative collective supporting Black culture and community arts

Thank you for visiting and exploring with us!
[**Tell us what you think of the learning guide here**](#)

KEEP IN TOUCH AND SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE @WEXARTS



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