“Race, Social Justice, and Contemporary African-American Art”

Cosponsors: Fox Center for Humanistic Inquiry, James Weldon Johnson Institute for the Study of Race and Difference, Art History Department

A talk with renowned artist Glenn Ligon

Discussants: Walter Melion (Director, Fox Center), Kimberly Wallace-Sanders (African American Studies), and Lisa Lee (Art History)

Wednesday, February 23rd, 4:15 pm EST via Zoom

To Register:
https://emory.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_bpWJ-zs-RZioUW05q8iV5A

The series focuses on the representation of black persons in contemporary African-American art, and on the various ways in which contemporary artists have engaged with the project of representing blackness. How do such representations attend to past and present articulations of race; how do they deal with such pressing issues as the imbrication of race and class; what diagnostic and/or therapeutic strategies do they apply to the vexed relation between race and social (in)justice?
Glenn Ligon

Glenn Ligon (b. 1960) is an artist living and working in New York. Throughout his career, Ligon has pursued an incisive exploration of American history, literature, and society across bodies of work that build critically on the legacies of modern painting and conceptual art. He is best known for his landmark text-based paintings, made since the late 1980s, which draw on the influential writings and speech of 20th-century cultural figures including James Baldwin, Zora Neale Hurston, Jean Genet, and Richard Pryor. He received a Bachelor of Arts from Wesleyan University and attended the Whitney Museum Independent Study Program. In 2011 the Whitney Museum of American Art held a mid-career retrospective of Ligon’s work, Glenn Ligon: America, organized by Scott Rothkopf, that traveled nationally. Important recent shows include Grief and Grievance (2021), at the New Museum, where Ligon acted as a curatorial advisor; Des Parisiens Noirs at the Musée d’Orsay, Paris (2019); Blue Black (2017), an exhibition Ligon curated at the Pulitzer Arts Foundation in St. Louis, inspired by the site-specific Ellsworth Kelly wall sculpture; and Glenn Ligon: Encounters and Collisions (2015), a curatorial project organized with Nottingham Contemporary and Tate Liverpool. Ligon has also been the subject of solo museum exhibitions at the Camden Arts Centre in London, the Power Plant in Toronto, the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, and the Studio Museum in Harlem, among others. His work has been included in major international exhibitions, including the Venice Biennale (2015 and 1997), Berlin Biennial (2014), Istanbul Biennial (2011, 2019), Documenta XI (2002), and Gwangju Biennale (2000).

Ligon’s work is held in the permanent collections of museums worldwide including Tate Modern, London; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Art Institute of Chicago; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. His awards and honors include a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship and the Studio Museum’s Joyce Alexander Wein Artist Prize. Most recently, Ligon was elected as a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

Glenn Ligon’s talk is part of the Race, Social Justice, and Contemporary African-American Art Series, sponsored by the Fox Center for Humanistic Inquiry, The James Weldon Johnson Institute for the Study of Race and Difference, and the Department of Art History.