

RYAN LEE

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May Stevens: Fight the Power
515 West 26th Street, Floor 3
July 10 – August 22, 2014

RYAN LEE is pleased to announce *May Stevens: Fight the Power*, an installation of work completed during the Civil Rights era in the United States, including a selection of drawings on exhibition for the first time from the formative Big Daddy series (1967-1975) and a death portrait of Malcolm X. Related works by Stevens can be seen in *Witness: Arts and Civil Rights in the Sixties*, curated by Teresa A. Carbone and Dr. Kellie Jones at the Brooklyn Museum of Art through July 6, 2014, travelling to the Hood Museum of Art at Dartmouth College in August 2014 and later to the Blanton Museum of Art at the University of Texas at Austin.

On view in the second gallery is *Malcolm X* (1968). Stevens, who attended Malcolm X's funeral in 1965, drew this death portrait from memory. It is an intimate, abstracted portrayal of the Muslim minister and human rights advocate lying in state. Other works on view include Big Daddy Paper Doll and works on paper. In a distinctive flat, colorful style, Stevens' denounces what Big Daddy represents: the apathetic, caustic power structure responsible for war, civil injustice, and gender inequality.

A founding member of *Heresies, A Feminist Publication on Art and Politics* (1976), Stevens belongs to the first generation of female activist artists, a group who's experiencing renewed critical attention today. Her long-standing interest in political and social systems of race, gender, and class produced several large series of works in the 1960s that chronicled her protests against patriarchal systems and power structures in the US, as well as the Vietnam War and the country's racist policies.

In 1999, Stevens had a major retrospective exhibition at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, entitled *Images of Women Near and Far 1983-1997*, the museum's first exhibition of its kind for a living female artist, and has since been the subject of important solo exhibitions at the New Museum, Minneapolis Institute of Art, Springfield Museum of Art (Missouri), National Museum of Women in the Arts, Cornell University's Herbert F. Johnson Museum, and the National Academy Museum. Stevens's work is included in the collections of major museums, including the Brooklyn Museum; deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum; Metropolitan Museum of Art; Minneapolis Institute of Fine Arts; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Museum of Modern Art; National Museum of Women in the Arts, DC; New Museum of Contemporary Art, NY; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; and the Whitney Museum of American Art.

She has received numerous awards including 10 MacDowell Colony residencies, a Women's Caucus for Art Lifetime Achievement Award (1990), Guggenheim Fellowship in painting (1986), National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship in painting (1983), Andy Warhol Foundation residency (2001), and the Distinguished Artist Award for Lifetime Achievement by the College Art Association (2001).

Concurrently on view is *Tim Braden: Porthmeor*. Additionally, forthcoming exhibitions at the gallery include *Josh Dorman* and *Joan Logue*, both of which will be on view from September 4th through October 11th. Please contact Courtney Willis Blair at 212-397-0742 or courtney@ryanleegallery.com for further press inquiries.