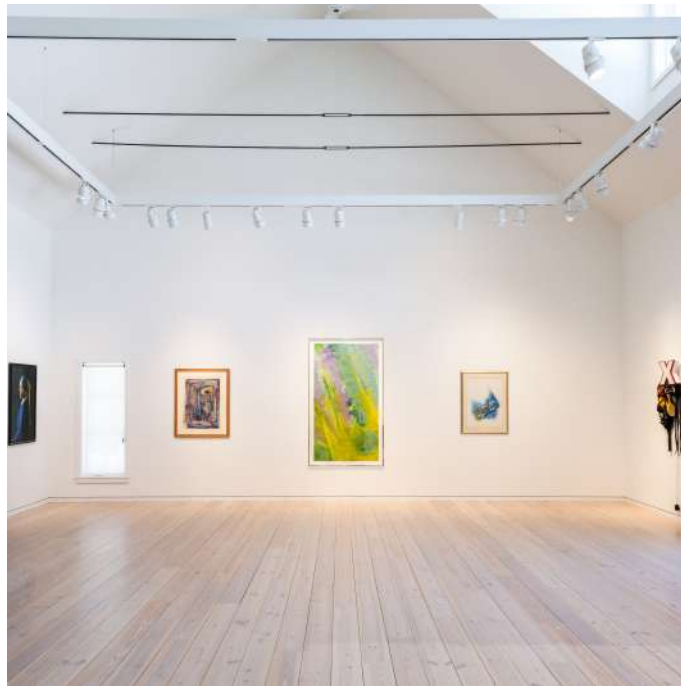


# James Barron Art



## Direct Action / Homage to Martin Luther King Jr. March 6 – April 24, 2021

In his eminent 1963 “Letter from a Birmingham City Jail,” Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. wrote, “You may ask: ‘Why direct action? Why sit ins, marches, and so forth? Isn’t negotiation a better path?’ You are quite right in calling for negotiation. Indeed, this is the very purpose of direct action... to foster such a tension that a community... is forced to confront the issue. My citing the creation of tension as part of the work of the nonviolent register may sound rather shocking. But I must confess that I am not afraid of the word ‘tension.’ ...There is a type of constructive, nonviolent tension which is necessary for growth.”

James Barron Art is pleased to present an exhibition of works by Black artists, ranging from 1949 through the present, that encompass the spirit of Dr. King’s call to action.

“Our current exhibition is the logical follow up to our show *Fifty Years After: Gordon Parks, Carrie Mae Weems, Mickalene Thomas, LaToya Ruby Frazier* in the summer of 2016,” says James Barron. “Tragically, in the past four years, we have erased many of the gains made towards a more just world with civil rights. This show marks a new beginning. We hope to highlight the direct action in art that has been a consequence of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s remarkable ‘Letter From a Birmingham City Jail.’ Our show not only pays tribute to the achievement of Black American artists, but is a call to action and an opening of the door for further equality in the arts.”

Our exhibition highlights works created contemporaneously with the Civil Rights movement, as well as contemporary works that embrace the spirit of alternative action. Faith Ringgold's 2007 portfolio and accompanying book illustrate Dr. King's letter with scenes of protests, segregation, and racial injustice alongside daily tableaux, bringing the inequalities King describes into sharp focus. Self-taught artists Clementine Hunter, Mose Tolliver, Lonnie Holley and Winfred Rembert used their artistic practices to record memories of Southern life prior to, and during, the Civil Rights Movement.

Abstract expressionists Norman Lewis, Beauford Delaney, and Charles Alston were founding members of Spiral, a New York collective of Black artists formed in 1963 to explore their artistic relationship to the Civil Rights movement and American politics and culture. The group's members worked in a variety of styles, though often within the tradition of modernist abstraction, and often held varying viewpoints on the merging of art and politics, which contributed to a lasting dialogue that is still relevant today.

Vanessa German uses unconventional materials to create her sculptural compositions, which use historical references to communicate the contemporary Black experience in America. Similarly, photographers Jeanne Moutoussamy-Ashe, Awol Erizku, and Zanele Muholi take inspiration from art historical canon, particularly portraiture, to inform their compositions. Erizku riffs on Vermeer's *Girl with a Pearl Earring* to create a work that is wholly unique. Identifying as a 'visual activist,' Zanele Muholi creates portraits of Black lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex people living in their native South Africa, which serve to promote King's legacy across the globe.

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Gallery is open by appointment only.  
For more information, contact [info@jamesbarronart.com](mailto:info@jamesbarronart.com).