



EL MUSEO DEL BARRIO ANNOUNCES 2017 SUMMER EXHIBITIONS
NKAME: A RETROSPECTIVE OF CUBAN PRINTMAKER BELKIS AYÓN
and *UPTOWN: NASTY WOMEN/BAD HOMBRES*
OPENING ON JUNE 13th, ON VIEW THROUGH NOVEMBER 5th

PRESS AND VIP PREVIEW
Monday, June 12th
6-7pm | Remarks at 6.45pm
Opening continues until 9pm
El Museo del Barrio
1230 Fifth Avenue
RSVP to press@elmuseo.org



La Sentencia. Belkis Ayón. 1993. Collograph. 96 x 67 cm.
Collection of the Belkis Ayón Estate. Courtesy of El Museo del Barrio.



The Street Becomes, Jaime Permeth. 2017
Digital pigment prints on handmade Japanese paper. 22 x 17 in. Courtesy of the artist.

El Museo del Barrio present their two summer exhibitions, showcasing a multitude of artists who explore themes ranging from the power of the media and the legacies of racism, to Afro-Cuban mythology.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

New York, NY, June 2, 2017 – Opening on June 13th, in conjunction with the annual Museum Mile Festival, El Museo del Barrio presents their two summer exhibitions: *Nkame: A Retrospective of Cuban Printmaker Belkis Ayón* and *uptown: nasty women/bad hombres*. These two exhibitions, on view through November 5th, present both local and international stories—while *Nkame: A Retrospective of Cuban Printmaker Belkis Ayón* represents the first ever U.S. retrospective of Cuban artist Belkis Ayón, *uptown: nasty women/bad hombres* presents a powerful group show of local artists living and working in uptown Manhattan.

ABOUT NKAME: A RETROSPECTIVE OF CUBAN PRINTMAKER BELKIS AYÓN

Nkame: A Retrospective of Cuban Printmaker Belkis Ayón is a landmark retrospective, the first in the U.S. dedicated to the work of Belkis Ayón (1967–1999). Ayón was a Cuban visual artist who mined the founding myth of the Afro-Cuban fraternal society Abakuá to create an independent and powerful visual iconography. Ayón was known for her signature technique of collography, a printing process in which materials of various textures and absorbencies are collaged onto a cardboard matrix and then run through the press with paper. Her narratives, many of which were produced at very large scale by joining multiple printed sheets, are imbued with an air of mystery, in part due to her deliberately austere palette of shades and subtle tones of black, white, and grey. For a black Cuban woman, both her ascendancy in the contemporary printmaking world and her investigation of a powerful all-male brotherhood were notable and bold. *Nkame*, a sweeping overview of her most fertile period of artistic creativity, covers Ayón's graphic production from 1986 until her untimely passing in 1999.

Belkis Ayón (1967-1999) was born in Havana, and became a professor of engraving at the San Alejandro Academy and at the Instituto Superior de Arte in 1993. In the same year, she participated in the XVI Venice Biennale, where she received her first international prize at the International Graphics Biennale in Maastricht, Holland, and had the largest solo exhibition of her work in Havana to date, *Siempre vuelvo* (I Always Return). The Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), Los Angeles invited Belkis to participate in the Kwangju Biennial in South Korea in 1997. Subsequently, MOCA, and the Museum of Modern Art in New York acquired her works for their collections. In 1998 Ayón was awarded a prize at the *xii Bienal de San Juan del Grabado Latinoamericano y del Caribe* in Puerto Rico. In March of 1998 she held her last solo exhibition, *Desasosiego/Restlessness* at the Couturier Gallery in Los Angeles.

In Cuba, Ayón was regarded as an “exponent of the cultural identity and roots of the nation.” Her work, however, transcends local values. She created a discourse that railed against marginality, frustration, fear, censorship, violence, and impotence—one that instead promoted the quest for freedom. These were extremely sensitive topics given



the severe political and economic crises that Cuba faced following the dissolution of Eastern European socialism in 1991.

ABOUT UPTOWN: NASTY WOMEN/BAD HOMBRES

As part of its participation in The Wallach Art Gallery at Columbia University's first *Uptown* triennial, El Museo del Barrio presents an exhibition of artists living or working in El Barrio, Harlem, Washington Heights and Inwood. El Museo's *uptown: nasty women/bad hombres* presents the work of artists engaging with the legacies of sexism, racism, homophobia, the power of the media, the state of health care and our natural environment, and violence in various ways. The artists explore these issues through poetry, symbolism, and metaphor or by exploring particular forms of artistic practice associated with rupture or bearing witness as a form of social protest. Some employ gendered or radical forms of art making for their purposes. Collage, documentary photography, poetic text, painting, needlepoint, textile work and video are all methods enlisted by these artists to create works that deal with various social issues. Artists included in the exhibition are: Elan Cadiz, Vladimir Cybil Charlier, Pepe Coronado, COCO144/Roberto Gualtieri, Jaime Davidovich, Carlos De Jesus, Rene De Los Santos, Francisco Donoso, FEEGZ/Carlos Jesús Martínez Domínguez, Sandra Fernández, Marquita Flowers, Reynaldo García Pantaleón, Alex Guerrero, Leslie Jiménez, Lauren Kelley, Rejin Leys, Stephanie Lindquist, Miguel Luciano, Luanda Lozano, Ivan Monforte, José Morales, Darío Oleaga, Jaime Permuth, Kenny Rivero, Moses Ros-Suarez, José Rodríguez, Aya Rodríguez-Izumi, Ruben Natal-San Miguel, Sable Elyse Smith, Rider Ureña, Regina Viqueira, and Nari Ward.

ABOUT EL MUSEO DEL BARRIO

El Museo del Barrio is New York's leading Latin American cultural institution. Through its extensive collections, varied exhibitions and publications, bilingual public programs, educational activities, festivals, and special events, El Museo educates its diverse public in the richness of Caribbean, Latino and Latin American arts and cultural history. By introducing young people to this cultural heritage, El Museo is creating the next generation of museum-goers, while satisfying the growing interest in Caribbean, Latino and Latin American art among a broad national and international audience.

El Museo del Barrio is located at 1230 Fifth Avenue at 104th Street in New York City. Hours are Wednesday through Saturday, 11am to 6pm and Sunday 12pm to 5pm. Suggested Admission. For more information on the Museum, please visit www.elmuseo.org.

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