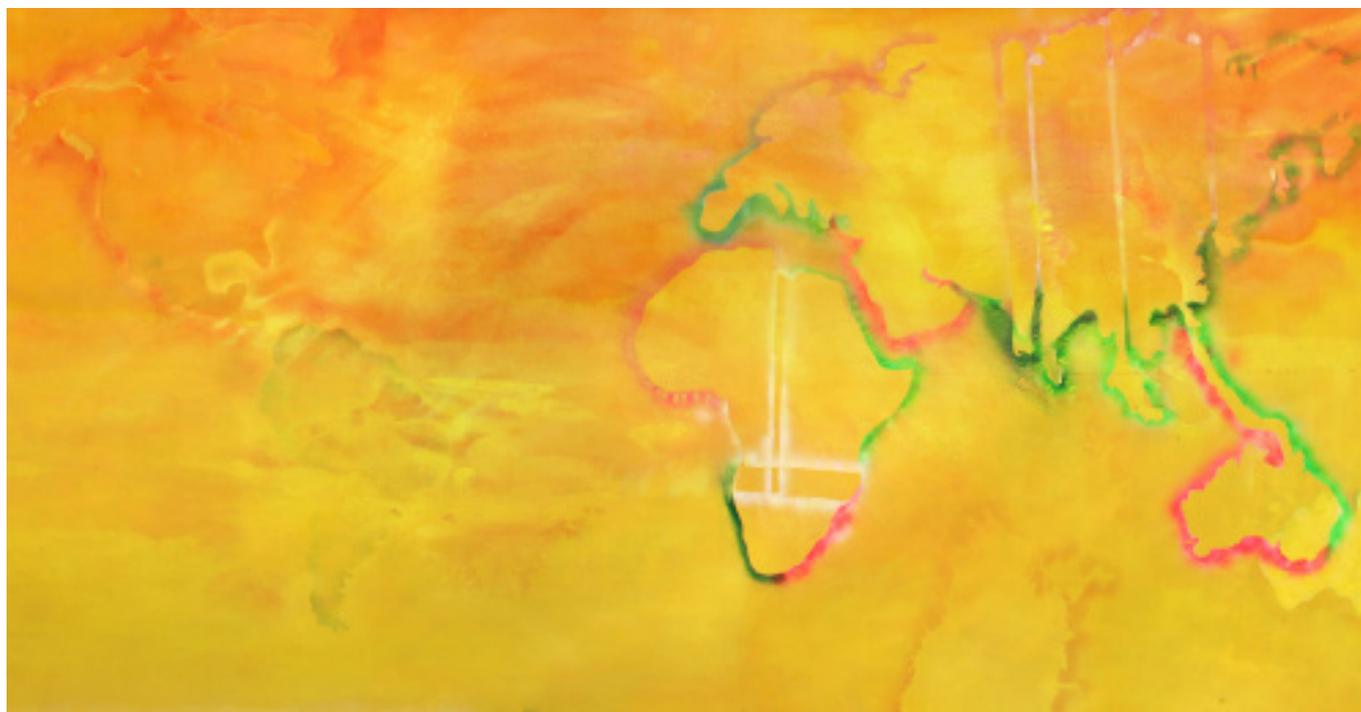


H A L E S

FRANK BOWLING

Andrea Leonhardt, "Soul of a Nation,' Critically Acclaimed Exhibit Celebrating Black Power; Comes to Brooklyn', BK Reader, 30 March 2018



Frank Bowling, *Australia to Africa*, 1971, (detail).

The critically acclaimed exhibition *Soul of a Nation: Art in the Age of Black Power*, organized by Tate Modern in London, will make its only East Coast stop this fall at the Brooklyn Museum. On view from September 14, through February 3, 2019, *Soul of a Nation* promises an unprecedented look at a broad spectrum of work by more than 60 African American artists from 1963 to 1983, one of the most politically and socially revolutionary periods in American history.

“With *Soul of a Nation*, we are honored to highlight the truly exceptional work produced by African American artists during one of the most significant moments in U.S. history,” said Anne Pasternak, Shelby White and Leon Levy Director of the Brooklyn Museum.

The exhibit will feature more than 150 works ranging from painting to assemblage, sculpture, photography and performance. *Soul of a Nation* brings together for the first time the pieces of more than 60 Black influential artists, including Frank Bowling, Sam Gilliam, Barkley Hendricks, Alma Thomas, Jack Whitten and William T. Williams, among others.

The show begins in 1963 with the Spiral collective, a group of New York-based painters, including Romare Bearden, Norman Lewis and Emma Amos, who explored the role of

Black artists in the struggle for civil rights. The exhibition goes on to trace how artists across the country continued to work during the rise of the Black Power Movement. Artists such as John Outterbridge and Noah Purifoy made works inspired by the aftermath of the Watts Rebellion of 1965. Emory Douglas, who served as the minister of culture for the Black Panther Party, created graphics and illustrations that became powerful symbols of the movement, 24 of which are also included in the exhibition.

In Chicago, a group of artists formed AfriCOBRA, whose philosophy aimed to empower Black communities. Works by its founding members will be on display, including Gerald Williams's *Say It Loud* (1969), whose vibrant colors, graphic lettering and use of black figures were emblematic of the AfriCOBRA style. In New York, painters incorporated symbols of protest, solidarity and Black pride, while many organized for institutional inclusion. Also featured is artist and professor David Driskell, who drew upon similar themes in his painting, as he worked to organize university art departments across the South and promote scholarship of African American art. Other works show the emergence of integral figures in Black feminism such as Kay Brown, Faith Ringgold and Betye Saar, highlighting an important moment of visibility for female artists.

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“Artists in this exhibition bravely and variously created art responsive to an urgent time of social, political and aesthetic rupture, resulting in some of the most striking works created in the late twentieth century,” said Ashley James, assistant curator of Contemporary Art. “This exhibition adds to an already existing and growing focus on the art produced during the Black Power Movement, an indication of the period’s important and continued resonance with our present as well as the absolute excellence that defines the art of the era.”