

Lorraine O'Grady

ALEXANDER GRAY ASSOCIATES

510 West 26th Street

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Artist and critic Lorraine O'Grady's latest exhibition, a pairing of two previously seen series, is an exploration of how narrative is used to make sense of the world. Spread over the gallery's street-level space, "Cutting Out of the New York Times," 1977/2015, contains elements of memoir, journalism, and social critique. First exhibited in 2006, photocopied sections from O'Grady's first poems stick to the walls, resembling vertical and horizontal scrolls of text cut from the *New York Times* over twenty-six Sundays in 1977. "White and Black and / The Sound That Shook Hollywood / The Crisis Deepens in / Theatrical Détente" one sheet reads, and on another, "Transforming Faces / The Woman as Artist / Cosmetic Lib for Men."

The forty-eight photographs in "Rivers, First Draft," 1982/2015, appear in a similar fashion on the first floor but sectioned across the gallery's five walls as if storyboarded into scenes. O'Grady imagined this narrative, originally performed in a leafy section of Central Park, as a personal metamorphosis, with the brightly dressed characters each representing a stage in her artistic development. Both works are innately rebellious, as the language of one medium is usurped to create meaning in another, and hint at O'Grady's critical stance on New York's art world and second-wave feminism.

The pacing of these coming-of-age existential narratives is metered by their method, their seeming randomness made meaningful through juxtaposition. They are deeply personal attempts at looking at how words and images connect to form knowledge, but O'Grady is asking us to see beyond the status quo, to reframe what we know in new paradigms of existence.



Lorraine O'Grady, *Rivers, First Draft*, 1982/2015, digital C-print in 48 parts, 16 x 20".

— Heidi Harrington-Johnson