

## All Power to the People! Emory Douglas & The Black Panthers

Exhibition: 28.09.2018 — 22.12.2018

Preview: Thursday 27.09.2018, 5 PM + walking dinner, RSVP: [eline@westdenhaag.nl](mailto:eline@westdenhaag.nl)

Location: West Museumkwartier, Lange Voorhout 34, Nederland

Extra: 2 day symposium, more info: [www.westdenhaag.nl](http://www.westdenhaag.nl)

**As the Minister of Culture for the Black Panther Party, Emory Douglas became responsible for all the graphic and visual design. His iconic works are symbol of the Afro-American situation during the sixties and seventies in the United States, and the struggle for change. The party was fully aware of the fact that visual culture is of major importance for the transfer of the political message. Their battle cry 'All power to the People!' did not lose its strength and is actually still in full force.**

From 1967 until the seventies, Douglas worked as the Communications expert for the Black Panther Party. The party offered resistance to racism, police brutality and social inequality in the US, in that period during which Martin Luther King, Malcolm X and others were killed. For Douglas, art and activism formed part of each other. For more than ten years, the Black Panther Party published a newspaper, which was produced by Douglas. Together with other members, he created art for the newspaper, for posters and other printed matter. One of the major purposes was the creation of a common language, and art formed an essential part of this. As it were, art was the right tool for activism; it informed people about the problems and the necessity for a revolution.

The characteristic feature of Douglas' style is the powerful way in which he manages to convey the Afro-American community that was still oppressed at that time. He constructed a visual mythology which helped to transform a group that felt completely powerless into an politicized and militant community. His energetic style managed to illustrate the appalling social position of the Afro-American community in a respectful and empathic way. The newspaper and Douglas' drawings contributed to the battle for freedom by showing the brutal reality of life in the American ghettos, as well as the confrontation with the oppressors. Douglas' most trenchant images generated aversion due to the fierce violence, but also attraction, by depicting the idea of effective self-defense.

Both in the US and in the Netherlands, institutional and everyday racism is still the cause of social and economic inequality between various groups in society. Douglas' works and his appeal for revolution form a major framework to have a critical look at current times. In this exhibition, West will show works from the early years of the party that were used for the promotion and campaign of the Black Panther Party. During the two-day symposium, we want to investigate the role of artists and activists in the battle for a fairer society. And we hope to contribute to the intellectual development of future generations that will have to continue this battle.

The work of Emory Douglas (1943) has been published in several books, such as *Black Panther: The Revolutionary Art of Emory Douglas* and has been exhibited at MOCA Museum of contemporary Art, Los Angeles; New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York; Gregorio Escalante Gallery, Los Angeles; Tate Modern, London; SESC Sao Paulo, Brazil; Museo de Arte del Banco de la República, Bogotá; Liverpool Biennale, UK; Sydney Biennale 2008, Sydney; Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco; Showroom Mama, Rotterdam; Urbis, Manchester; Station Museum of Contemporary Art, Houston.

This exhibition at West Den Haag is a project by La silueta and curated by Juan Pablo Fajardo.

If you have any questions, please contact Eline vd Haak: [eline@westdenhaag.nl](mailto:eline@westdenhaag.nl) or +31 (0)70.3925359

West is supported by ao. RVB, ANNA Vastgoed & Cultuur, Gemeente Den Haag and Ministry of OCW.

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