Faith Ringgold

For more than five decades the artist, activist and writer, Faith Ringgold (b. 1930, Harlem, New York) has consistently challenged perceptions of African American identity and gender inequality through the lenses of the feminist and the civil rights movements. As cultural assumptions and prejudices persist, her work retains its contemporary resonance.

She created her first political paintings, The American People Series from 1963 to 1967. In the early 1970s Ringgold began making tankas (inspired by a Tibetan art form of paintings framed in richly brocaded fabrics), soft sculptures and masks. She later utilised this medium in her masked performances of the 1970s and 80s.

“Developing a tradition once practiced by her great-great grandmother Susie Shannon, who was born into slavery and produced quilts for plantation owners, Ringgold uses fabric to weave together personal stories and histories of African American experience.” — Osei Bonsu (Frieze)

Focussing on different series that she has created over the past 50 years, this major survey of her work includes paintings, story quilts and political posters made during the Black Power movement.

“This concise retrospective at Serpentine sprints through almost 50 years of strong and precisely considered works. All contribute to Ringgold’s grander enterprise, in which narrative is deployed as a powerful force, taking back histories and suggesting alternatives to the status quo.” — Hettie Judah (The Guardian)

Published on the occasion of the exhibition at Serpentine Gallery, London (6 June – 8 September 2019).

Key Selling Points

Faith Ringgold is Professor Emeritus of Art at the University of California in San Diego. She has received 23 Honorary Doctorates


Outside of the USA, she has exhibited at Tate Modern (London), National Portrait Gallery (London), Museu Picasso (Barcelona)