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Kandis Williams: A Line

October 28, 2021-January 8, 2022
52 Walker Street, New York



Kandis Williams, *Line Intersection Sublimation: Uptown Downtown satisfactions of Swan Lake, east west Pavlova to Mezentseva, Madonna Whore Balanchine to Dunham.*, 2021. © Kandis Williams. Courtesy the artist and 52 Walker, New York.

David Zwirner is pleased to open [52 Walker](#), a new David Zwirner gallery programmed by Ebony L. Haynes, on October 28. The inaugural exhibition, *A Line*, will feature works by Kandis Williams, whose versatile practice spans collage, performance, video, assemblage, and installation. Her work interrogates issues of race, nationalism, authority, and eroticism. This will be Williams's first solo presentation in New York.

Based primarily in Los Angeles, Williams will debut new works that were created in New York for *A Line*. The exhibition will feature a video, collages, and sculptures that move toward a formal dance notation. Notation has been used in different modes throughout history to capture and inscribe the qualities of movement in two dimensions. Williams draws upon her background in dramaturgy to envision a space that accommodates the varied biopolitical economies that inform how movement might be read. She establishes indices that network the parts of the anatomy, regions of Black diaspora, communication and obfuscation, and how popular culture and myth are interconnected.

Laying out a multipronged matrix, Williams introduces four "forks" that she has charted in her history of dance to unspool its white supremacist underpinnings. The first is the anthropological and social understanding of dance as a part of healing, ritual, and entertainment. The second is the "dance of death": how martial forms emerged as a response to how societies have been organized. The third is an appraisal of courtly dance, which has heavily shaped ballet and modern dance as we understand it today. The final fork looks at contemporary movement and the intellectual property of dance.

001 The exhibited works traffic between these forks to shape an alternative
002 language that suggests how Black moving bodies are regarded. The video will
003 focus on markings and inscriptions that elaborate individual, collective,
004 and historiographic schema from stage diagrams to astrological charts. A
005 series of plant sculptures will feature representations of Black pinups,
006 whose bodies turning away from the viewer are antithetical to the frontal,
007 balletic positionality of contemporary dancers. The collage works will
008 combine images that reference the ghosts of dance's past, present, and
009 future—subverting what oppressive structures might term “influence,” but
010 what others might see as brutal appropriation.

011 *A Line* follows Williams's 2020-2021 solo presentation *A Field* at the
012 Institute for Contemporary Art, Virginia Commonwealth University, which
013 considered the tango through the transatlantic slave trade, prison labor,
014 and horticulture through patterns of migration. Recasting history to evade
015 hegemonic frameworks, Williams makes visible the inexpressible violence to
016 which Black bodies have been subject in dance and beyond.

017 *Clarion*, the 52 Walker publication series from David Zwirner Books, will be
018 releasing an accompanying exhibition catalogue featuring contributions by
019 Haynes, artist and writer Hannah Black, and a conversation between Williams
020 and the choreographer Okwui Okpokwasili. Additionally, Williams will
021 contribute notes on the work and bibliographical references.

022 023 About Kandis Williams

024 **Kandis Williams** was born in 1985 in Baltimore and received her BFA from
025 Cooper Union in New York in 2009. She is the founder of the publishing and
026 educational platform Cassandra Press. In 2021, Williams was granted the
027 prestigious Mohn Award by the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles.

028
029 In 2020, the Institute for Contemporary Art at Virginia Commonwealth
030 University, Richmond, opened *Kandis Williams: A Field*, the artist's first
031 institutional solo exhibition, as part of the museum's *Provocations*
032 commission series. The exhibition was curated by Amber Esseiva and featured
033 a site-responsive installation.

034 Williams has presented solo exhibitions at Night Gallery, Los Angeles (2021
035 and 2016); Cooper Cole, Toronto (2018); Works on Paper, Vienna (2017); St.
036 Charles Projects, Baltimore (2016); and SADE, Los Angeles (2016).
037 Iterations of Williams's ongoing body of work *Eurydice*, a project that was
038 profiled in *Artforum* in March 2020, have been presented at Blum & Poe, Los
040 Angeles (2019); NAVEL, Los Angeles (2018); and as part of *Triptyque*,
041 organized by Alex Zhang Hungtai for the Red Bull Music Festival Montréal
042 (2018). In 2018, Williams was included in *A Woman's Work*, an event series
043 organized by Rachel Kaadzi Ghansah at The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

044 Work by Williams has also been included in significant group exhibitions,
045 most recently in the 2020 *Made in L.A.* biennial at the Hammer Museum, Los
046 Angeles, and The Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens, San
047 Marino, for which the artist presented a new body of large-scale collages
048 alongside earlier works. Other group exhibitions that have included
049 Williams's work were presented by the Wignall Museum of Contemporary Art,
050 Rancho Cucamonga, California (2019); Frye Art Museum, Seattle (2018); The

001 Studio Museum in Harlem, New York (2015); and the Underground Museum, Los
002 Angeles (2014), among others.

003 Williams is represented by Night Gallery, Los Angeles. The artist lives and
004 works in Los Angeles.
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007 About 52 Walker

008
009 52 Walker is a David Zwirner gallery space programmed and led by Director
010 Ebony L. Haynes. The gallery takes its name from its location at 52 Walker
011 Street in Tribeca, and occupies the first and lower floors of the five-
012 story landmark building. 52 Walker will function differently than the other
013 David Zwirner locations. The gallery's exhibition schedule will resemble
014 that of a kunsthalle with longer presentation timelines allowing visitors
015 to engage with the works and show programming for the duration of a season.
016 Departing from the traditional commercial gallery format, Haynes's personal
017 curatorial practice, which focuses on conceptual and research-based artists
018 from a range of backgrounds and stages in their careers, will be a
019 trademark of the space. An edition of *Clarion*, the gallery's publication,
020 will accompany each exhibition, highlighting scholarship and research on
021 the exhibiting artists.
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