

June 2, 2020

Dear SFMOMA Staff, & Neal Benezra, Janet Bishop, Chad Coerver, Nan Keeton, Ann von Germeten, Gina Yrrizarry and Jill Lynch:

We are Nure Collective. We are a group of eleven Black artists who live in Oakland and San Francisco. We have worked with SFMOMA before as individuals but in April of 2020 we were approached by SFMOMA and members of your public engagement and curatorial teams to do a takeover of your website as a part of their #MuseumfromHome series.

For the project we created a video, provided a written interview, and produced a gameshow. On May 28th our project launched on the SFMOMA website and Instagram.

Only days after featuring us and promoting the ethos of our all-Black-membered collective Glenn Ligon's piece "We're Black and Strong (I) 1996" was posted on SFMOMA's instagram account. The caption featured a quote from Ligon that reads "Why do we need to raise our hands in that symbolic space again and again and again to be present in this country?".

The quote and the body of work clearly is about Black people in this country continuously having to advocate for our own representation, well-being, and humanity.

It was shocking for us to see that a community member and former employee of SFMOMA, Taylor Brandon's, comment on the post was removed. The comment was an astute line of questioning of the post's sincerity and the museum's history with profiting from Black art/artists while not advocating for or protecting its Black constituents and employees. In addition to removing Brandon's comment, comments on the post were disabled so that any potential for further discussion was discouraged.

This action taken by SFMOMA staff was not only simply disrespectful but grossly inappropriate as our country continues to protest against the brutal murders of George Floyd, Tony McDade, Breonna Taylor and countless others. The silencing of Black voices is violence that contributes to the overall oppression of Black people in America. We are disappointed that SFMOMA and its staff would contribute to oppressing Black voices.

As a collective we understand that museums are not places of neutrality and as such we are demanding the following from SFMOMA:

- 1) That a public apology be provided to Taylor Brandon and all current and past Black employees at SFMOMA who have silently endured racism at the museum.
- 2) That SFMOMA re-examine and properly handle complaints made to HR by current SFMOMA employees regarding racial bias, bias against employees with disabilities, bias against LGTBQ+ identifying employees, gendered bias and sexual harassment.
- 3) That SFMOMA seriously consider replacing upper-level Marketing + Communications staff who have proven their racial bias even after taking part in November's all staff RACE Forward training.

- 4) That SFMOMA dedicate a permanent gallery space that will rotate the work of Black artists every six months. This gallery must include the work of artists already in the collection as well as emerging black artists.
 - a) Artists for this gallery will be selected by a committee of Black patrons of the museum, Black artists and Black local community members.
- 5) That SFMOMA create a step-oriented pipeline program that ensure young black curators are given opportunity to work within curatorial departments and not just education programming.
- 6) That SFMOMA make an initial donation of \$3,000 (the amount our collective was paid for our participation in #MuseumfromHome) to The George Floyd Memorial Fund, Memorial Fund for Tony McDade, and Anti-Police Terror Project (Oakland) — in the amount of \$1,000 each.
 - a) This donation amount of \$3,000 be a recurring quarterly donation to Black-led advocacy organizations, for a full year.
- 7) That SFMOMA begins the creation of a strategic plan that provides the public with quarterly updates and metrics regarding SFMOMA's progress on actions #2 - #6 — with explicit emphasis on sustained allocation of funds to local Black-led organizations.

If these demands are not met, we formally request that our content be removed from SFMOMA's website, archives, and that any content produced by or including our collective be removed from all SFMOMA run platforms.

We are hopeful that this letter leads to further discussions, implemented plans, and solutions that leverage the wealth of resources and visibility that SFMOMA and its board has, to the Black communities it must serve.

Sincerely,

nure
collective

Taylor Brandon