

the village
VOICE

THE YEAR IN OVERLOOKED ART

By Siddhartha Mitter, December 13, 2017



In 2017, more than most years, art supplied solace and refuge. The exhibition that healed my soul was “Beverly Buchanan: Ruins and Rituals,” the Brooklyn Museum’s retrospective, last winter, of the late painter, sculptor, and land artist. Buchanan’s slow, stubborn, quiet involvement through her art with the American — specifically Southeastern — landscape and its histories helped settle my agitation in the wake of the presidential election, and strengthen me for whatever came next.

The exhibition that taught me the most was “We Wanted a Revolution: Black Radical Women, 1965–85,” also at the Brooklyn Museum, an illuminating and necessary survey that warranted multiple visits. And the show that dropped my jaw to the floor, for sheer mastery and emotional depth, was “Nkame,” the retrospective of the Cuban printmaker Belkis Ayón, at El Museo del Barrio.

Great art opens horizons, develops alternative histories, presents ideas for the new world. I visited dozens of shows, and wrote about many. Below are ten more that time and space constraints did not allow me to cover. I wanted to note them before the calendar turns to 2018.

STEVEN
KASHER
GALLERY

Jill Freedman, "Resurrection City, 1968"

Weeks after Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s death, the Poor People's Campaign he launched came to Washington, D.C., where 3,000 people set up in wooden shanties on the National Mall. Freedman joined them, and photographed life in "Resurrection City" until its demolition by police in late June 1968. Her black-and-white images eschew heroism or pity; they are simply present, and deeply humane. They remain on view through next week.

(Steven Kasher Gallery, October 26–December 22)