

HYPERALLERGIC

Reflections from Black Women Artists for Black Lives Matter

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On the first night of September, more than 100 Black women artists took over the New Museum. Invited by artist Simone Leigh as part of her exhibition *The Waiting Room*, the women filled the institution from white wall to white wall with performances, workshops, videos, chants, a text collage, a digital altar, and more. The event began with a procession into the museum and ended with a parade out; in between, the space swelled with an unapologetically empowering celebration of Black women and lives. It was unlike anything I've ever seen in a museum. It is something I hope to see much more of. Black Women Artists for Black Lives Matter (#BWAforBLM) began in July. The group met at the New Museum every week throughout this hot, violent summer to discuss how to creatively support Black Lives Matter; in the process, the women said, they also ended up supporting and sustaining themselves. Here, 10 of them offer some brief reflections on their collaborative creation — how it came to be and how it felt, what it was and what it meant.

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Tomashi Jackson

On the evening of the event I accompanied DJ Tara Duvivier, and eventually the Women in Red, in the lobby and read aloud from the Movement for Black Lives policy platform, “A Vision for Black Lives,” throughout the evening, which includes six clear demands and accompanying policy briefs with recommendations. It was imperative that our audience leave knowing that there *is* a way forward and that grief is not the last stop in response to the state-sponsored violence that continues to target Black people and other marginalized communities. Before the concluding Second Line procession, the entire lobby was packed to capacity with people engaging in call and response, repeating the first demand — “END THE WAR ON BLACK PEOPLE” — in perfect unison. It was amazing.

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