

# The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum

For Immediate Release

## ADRIAN PIPER'S *WHISTLEBLOWER CATALYSIS* PERFORMANCE RESTAGED FOR THE FIRST TIME IN FIFTY-ONE YEARS AT THE ALDRICH CONTEMPORARY ART MUSEUM



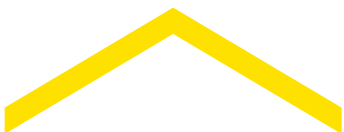
Photos: Gloria Pérez

Ridgefield, CT (June 6, 2022)—On Saturday, June 4, 2022, Adrian Piper's performance *Whistleblower Catalysis* (1971) was restaged at The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum at the exhibition opening for *52 Artists: A Feminist Milestone*. This was the first time it has been performed since its debut at the Museum's 1971 exhibition *Twenty Six Contemporary Women Artists*, curated by Lucy R. Lippard. The recent performance at The Aldrich included six performers dressed to blend in with the attendees of the exhibition opening who moved within the gallery spaces and outside to the Museum's front terrace, blowing artist-selected whistles with each breath. The first written documentation of Piper's *Catalysis* series was published by the artist in the exhibition catalogue for *Twenty Six Contemporary Women Artists*.

For the 1971 exhibition, *Twenty Six Contemporary Women Artists*, Piper staged the performance of *Whistleblower Catalysis* at the opening which consisted of the artist and two others circulating the galleries with police whistles in their mouths. With each breath they took, the whistles would sound. This performance at The Aldrich was part of Piper's iconic *Catalysis* series of unannounced, conceptual actions. The term *catalysis* refers to a chemical process in which the result is influenced by the presence of a substance or material that accelerates or induces a significant change.

Piper's social disruptions confronted the norms of "appropriate" behavior, rattling the monotony of everyday life and causing viewers to become more aware of themselves and their behavior within the public sphere. Other works in the *Catalysis* series included *Catalysis I*, in which the artist wore foul-smelling clothing while riding the bus during rush hour; *Catalysis IV*, in which Piper stuffed a large towel in her mouth so that her cheeks were engorged and the ends of the fabric hung out of her mouth—also executed while riding public transportation; and *Catalysis V*, in which she played a tape recording of belching noises at full volume while studying at the library. In using her own body as a catalytic agent, Piper's *Catalysis* performances investigated the complexities of identity and the experience of navigating the world in which everyone operates based on their own preconceptions.

258 Main Street Ridgefield, CT 06877  
203.438.4519  
[www.thealdrich.org](http://www.thealdrich.org)



# The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum

For Immediate Release

---

**Adrian Piper** (b. 1948) is a Berlin-based Conceptual artist and philosopher. She received a BFA from the School of Visual Arts in 1969, and while continuing to exhibit her artwork internationally she received a BA in Philosophy from The City College of New York in 1974 and a Ph.D. in Philosophy from Harvard University in 1981. Piper was the first tenured woman professor of acknowledged African descent in the field of Philosophy and taught fulltime for thirty years with specializations in metaethics and Kant. She introduced issues of race and gender into the vocabulary of Conceptual art and explicit political content into Minimalism. In 2018, the seventh traveling retrospective of her work opened at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. She has been awarded the Golden Lion for Best Artists at the 56<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale, the 2018 Käthe-Kollwitz-Preis, and the 2021 Kaiserring Kunstpreis, among many other awards and fellowships in the fields of art and philosophy. She currently runs the APRA Foundation in Berlin.

**For press inquiries**, please contact Emily Devoe at 203.438.4519, extension 140, or [edevoe@thealdrich.org](mailto:edevoe@thealdrich.org)

258 Main Street Ridgefield, CT 06877  
203.438.4519  
[www.thealdrich.org](http://www.thealdrich.org)

