



APRIL 2020

HUMANITY EVERYWHERE

No Apartheid Anywhere | Valerie Maynard



Valerie Maynard. *No Apartheid Anywhere*. 1995. Sprayed acrylic on paper. Sheet: 41 9/16 × 106 7/8 in. (105.6 × 271.5 cm). Courtesy of the artist © Valerie Maynard

Seven distinct figures stand in a line, framed and enmeshed with a dense variety of shapes and smaller human silhouettes that appear to walk or dance. It is a monochromatic composition in which the paint ranges from a dense, inky black to a smoky spray of droplets. Some of the figures seem to be captured at a moment of open-mouthed shock or surprise. Embedded between three of the figures are two incomplete hands, suggesting a gesture of defense against some oncoming aggressor. Each figure is unique, ranging from an almost robotic figure with a grill-like chest on the left to an enigmatic figure with a face devoid of discernable features on the far right. As you look more closely, you may notice that specific features of the figures are impressions of objects like chains, nails, and hooks. And yet, consistent with her body of work, the artist, Valerie Maynard, has imbued these figures with an undeniable humanity—linked together in this active, layered image.

This artwork is part of Maynard's acclaimed *No Apartheid* series, which was created beginning in the 1980s and 1990s as a response to apartheid—the legalized discrimination against black South Africans—and the destruction of District Six in Cape Town that was representative of the South African government's violent tactics. Earlier works in the series are simpler and smaller—this complex, large-scale work was made later in the series.

Maynard made this work by carefully situating objects such as cut grass, saws, razor blades, chains, and other tools on a thick, strong paper. She then spray-painted layers of paint on the surface, leaving the impressions of the objects that form the figures and surrounding

imagery. Though similar to a traditional stenciling technique, Maynard's approach is somewhat riskier, as any inconsistency in the spray mechanism of the paint could have ruined the planned effect.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Ask students to look closely at *No Apartheid Anywhere*. What do they see? What are the many parts of the composition? Share with students information about Valerie Maynard and her motivation behind creating this work. What can they see in the work that connects to the idea behind the work and its title? Ask students how they think the work is made. As they share their thoughts, inform them of the artist's technical approach. Invite students to experiment with their own compositions inspired by Maynard's technique. Using a strong support such as cardboard or a heavy stock paper, students can select objects (that can be sacrificed to this process) to arrange into a composition. They can then spray paint from cans onto the objects on the support, then carefully remove the objects to reveal the final product. For a slightly different approach, students can also try acrylic paint and water mixed in a spray bottle (you might consider a wooden board for a support), which will provide a slightly messier, more splattered effect.

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