

## David Hammons Adds Six Rarely-Seen Works to Ongoing Exhibition *Body Prints: 1968–1979* Including a New Body Print from 2021

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New York, NY... The Drawing Center is delighted to announce that David Hammons has expanded the ongoing exhibition *David Hammons: Body Prints, 1968-1979* by **adding six body prints from his personal collection, including a new work from 2021** that features a specter-like figure wearing a face mask. **This will mark the first time that these body prints have been exhibited publicly.**

“One of the thrills of curating is when artists reach out to comment upon or participate in exhibitions of their historical work,” said Laura Hoptman, The Drawing Center’s Executive Director. “This is exactly what David Hammons has done by adding these rarely-seen works to our already rich display of his body print series. I encourage those who have seen the exhibition and were moved by it, to return to The Drawing Center and see how Hammons’s intervention has expanded the show and broadened our knowledge of this pivotal period in his career.”

**To mark the occasion, The Drawing Center will offer extended viewing hours from 6-8pm on the evening of Friday, April 23.** Visitors are required to make a free, timed-entry reservation ahead of their visit to The Drawing Center.

**The works will be on view beginning Friday, April 16, and will remain on view through May 23, 2021.**

**A second edition of the publication *David Hammons: Body Prints, 1968-1979* will be released in May of 2021,** and will include images of the six body prints that Hammons added to the installation and a revised introduction by Laura Hoptman.

### About the Exhibition

The first museum exhibition dedicated to David Hammons’s pivotal early works on paper, *David Hammons: Body Prints, 1968-1979* brings together the monoprints and collages in which the artist used the body as both a drawing tool and printing plate to explore performative, unconventional forms of image making. On view from February 5 through May 23, 2021, the exhibition features a significant number of Hammons’s large-scale body prints, including *Pray for America* (1969), as well as two sculptural objects, *Black Boy’s Window* (c. 1968) and *The Door (Admissions Office)* (1969). In addition, the exhibition presents examples of a lesser known, but no less important, series of Hammons’s body prints that utilize colored papers and inks. Together, the works highlighted in the exhibition argue for the ingeniousness of Hammons’s series—a project which introduced the major themes of a fifty-year career that is central to the history of postwar American art.

Hammons’s body prints represent the origin of his artistic language, one that has developed over

a long and continuing career and that emphasizes both the artifacts and subjects of contemporary Black life in the United States. Hammons created the body prints by greasing his own body—or that of another person—with substances including margarine and baby oil, pressing or rolling body parts against paper, and sprinkling the surface with charcoal or powdered pigment. The resulting impressions are intimately direct indexes of faces, skin, and hair that exist somewhere between spectral portraits and physical traces. Drawn, silkscreened, and collaged American flags, maps, pieces of clothing, and other found objects complicate the narratives of these works, as do their often-punning titles that offer pointed commentary. In a decade that was an inflection point for racial tension and racial justice in the United States, Hammons chose to use his own body to depict the quotidian joys and entrenched injustices of living as a Black man in midcentury America. More than a half century after they were made, these early works on paper remain a testament to Hammons's desire to reinterpret notions of the real; his celebration of the sacredness of objects touched or made by the Black body; his biting critique of racial oppression; and his deep commitment to social justice.

Born in 1943 in Springfield, Illinois, Hammons moved to Los Angeles in 1963 at the age of twenty and began making his body prints several years later. He studied at Otis Art Institute with the great draftsman Charles White and became part of a younger generation of Black avant-garde artists who were loosely associated with the Black Arts Movement. In the development of his technique of using a body to make a one-to-one likeness, Hammons was inspired by a number of sources including the assemblage and collage practices of Angeleno artists Noah Purifoy, John Outterbridge, and Betye Saar; as well as the performance work of Studio Z, a cohort of artists that included Senga Nengudi, Maren Hassinger, Houston Conwill, and others. Hammons was also deeply affected—perhaps indirectly—by Marcel Duchamp's readymade art object and use of the pun to expose language as the unstable information system that it is. Following his move to New York in 1978 Hammons's work became more three dimensional, but the fundamental tenets expressed in the body prints remain in his work to this day.

*David Hammons: Body Prints, 1968-1979* is organized by Laura Hoptman, Executive Director, with Isabella Kapur, Curatorial Assistant.

Images: *Untitled*, 2021. Grease, pigment, and ink on butcher paper, 35 3/4 x 26 inches. Courtesy of the Artist. Installation view: *David Hammons: Body Prints, 1968-1979*, The Drawing Center, New York. February 5 - May 23, 2021. Photo: Daniel Terna.

### Publication

**A second edition of the publication “David Hammons: Body Prints, 1968-1979” will be released in May of 2021.** It will include images of the six body prints that Hammons has added to the installation, as well as a revised introduction by Laura Hoptman; a conversation between curator, gallerist, and activist Linda Goode Bryant and artist Senga Nengudi; and an illuminating photo essay and text by photographer Bruce W. Talamon, who documented David Hammons at work on his body prints in his Los Angeles studio in 1974.

The publication will be available for purchase at The Drawing Center and its online bookstore at [drawingcenter.org](http://drawingcenter.org), and will be distributed to the trade by D.A.P. As with every publication produced by The Drawing Center, it will also be available at [drawingcenter.org](http://drawingcenter.org) to read in a digital format, free of charge.

### Credits

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