**OVERVIEW**

*Bold Disobedience* is a group exhibition presented in collaboration with Mikva Challenge. Selected by a council of twelve student curators, this collection of works demonstrates myriad social issues that matter to youths today. The exhibition comprises works by local professional artists as well as student artists from the Chicago High School for the Arts. These artworks grapple with the issues that our team of student curators have deemed most critical in our conflicted contemporary culture, promoting racial justice, economic equity, and queer rights. The student curators have directed every aspect of this exhibition, from research to conceptualization to installation.

**STUDENT CURATORS’ STATEMENT, IN THEIR WORDS**

2017 ushered a continued era of resistance, as unethical governmental issues and pre-judged biases are increasingly normalized in our everyday lives. Unable to participate in the electoral process, the youth engage in civic action and respond by doing everything in our power to make our voices heard. Young people have always defied injustice and now, more than ever, we are making clear what we stand for.

**ARTISTS**

Thalia Agosto, Natalie Aparicio, Evan Calabrese, Angela Davis Fegan, Maya Halko, Josue Herrera, Zachary Huff, Jaelyn Jacunski, Kuumba Lynx, Yvette Mayorga, Cheryl Pope, Prison + Neighborhood Arts Project, Sarah Ross, Dread Scott, and Raven Smith

**PARTNERS**

Mikva Challenge develops youth to be informed, empowered, and active citizens and community leaders. They do this by engaging youth in action civics, an authentic and transformative learning process built on youth voice and youth expertise.

**ABOUT WEINBERG/NEWTON GALLERY**

Weinberg/Newton Gallery is an exhibition space with a mission to educate and inform the public on social justice issues. Through artwork and programming, the gallery provides an engaging environment for discourse on critical contemporary issues facing our communities. Connecting artists with social justice organizations, the gallery works to drive change and cultivate a culture of consciousness.
Bold Disobedience is a group exhibition presented in collaboration with Mikva Challenge. Selected by a council of twelve student curators, this collection of works demonstrates myriad social issues that matter to youths today. The exhibition comprises works by established Chicago–based artists and collectives Angela Davis Fegan, Jaelyn Jacunski, Kuumba Lynx, Yvette Mayorga, Cheryl Pope, Prison + Neighborhood Arts Project, Sarah Ross, and Dread Scott as well as emerging artists who currently attend the Chicago High School for the Arts, Thalia Agosto, Natalie Aparicio, Evan Calabrese, Maya Halko, Josue Herrera, Zachary Huff, and Raven Smith.

These artworks parse the politics of place and identity. They foreground varied ways that art can function as resistance. They grapple with the issues that our team of student curators have deemed most critical in our conflicted contemporary culture, promoting racial justice, economic parity, and queer rights. In the students’ own words:

2017 ushered a continued era of resistance, as unethical governmental issues and pre-judged biases are increasingly normalized in our everyday lives. Unable to participate in the electoral process, the youth engage in civic action and respond by doing everything in our power to make our voices heard. Young people have always defied injustice and now, more than ever, we are making clear what we stand for.

As the exhibition title that the students chose, Bold Disobedience, wryly hints at – to obey today is to do nothing, to comply, to float along on the current of the status quo, to let digitally delivered distractions wash over us until we can no longer discern the motivating machinations behind them. Instead, Bold Disobedience is a call to participate in civic action, to identify and speak out against injustices, and to disrupt the systems that so deeply impact lived experiences. Within such a beautiful sense of efficacy amongst young people lies the promise of a more sustainable future.

The student curators have directed every aspect of Bold Disobedience, from research to conceptualization to installation. Their approach to curation has been in keeping with the methodology of Mikva Challenge, Weinberg/Newton Gallery’s
partner in presenting this exhibition. Mikva Challenge’s programs engage young people in action civics, a process through which they gain the fluency, confidence, and verve to become life-long active citizens. The mission of Mikva Challenge revolves around a core understanding that youths are experts on their own lives and can share that expertise to great effect. Mikva Challenge students serve on councils that advise the mayor’s office, the public schools, and the Chicago Housing Authority amongst other agencies. Our student curators applied the same principles and skills they use in these interventions to the development of Bold Disobedience.

Accordingly, the work on view reflects the youths’ acute understanding of the interrelated nature of injustices, including the reach of racial bias. Dread Scott’s video installation, Stop, presents life-sized depictions of young black men from both Brooklyn and Liverpool repeatedly stating how many times they have been stopped by police. Stop conveys the men’s extraordinary perseverance in the face of relentless harassment by the powers that be. Kuumba Lynx, a group that identifies itself as an urban arts youth development organization, involves participants from age 8 to 25 in projects pulling from the history and vocabulary of hip hop. These projects encourage young people of color to critically examine their surroundings and to advocate for a more just iteration of them.

The printmaking practice of Angela Davis Fegan promotes the transgression of boundaries by another community – LGBTQ people. Her typeset posters demand a more nuanced queer visibility. She often presents her posters in public bathrooms, the perversely contested site of the trans liberation movement today. She adopts the moniker The Lavender Menace to align her work with the history of radical lesbian activists in the 1970s and to extend their critique to the arguably narrow, assimilationist goals of some gay rights groups today. Student artist Evan Calabrese uses his photographic practice to create refined portraits of black LGBTQ youth. He sensitively portrays the intricacies of the daily lives of his peers.

Yvette Mayorga’s installations impose a visual vocabulary of confectionary adornment upon structures that conjure walls and piles of bricks. These combinations refer to community-building in America amongst Mexican immigrants – and the persistent reinforcement of boundaries and borders that challenge such efforts. Her work poses sugary excess and the game Candy Land as fraught metaphors for migration under conditions of white hegemony in the US. Youth artist Natalie Aparicio also creates altar installations to mourn the process of gentrification and its effects on the Latino populace in her neighborhood of Pilsen. Her work highlights the resilience of her people as they fight the localized erasure of their culture. In a related manner, Jaelyn Jacunski considers dimensions of race, class, and community through her maze- and wall-like installations. She employs fencing materials typically found surrounding construction sites in order to evoke the dynamics of gentrification in blighted urban areas. Jacunski's practice also encompasses printmaking, and she produces zines to accompany her installations in which she traces connections between current events pertaining to social justice.

Another artist whose practice explores the interrelatedness of class, access, and activism, Sarah Ross examines social ecologies with her often large-scale and collaborative projects. Our student curators have chosen to show Ross’s work with the Prison + Neighborhood Arts.
Project, which brings teaching artists and men incarcerated at Stateville Maximum Security Prison together to complete projects that speak to the parallel systemic oppressions that take place inside and outside of prison. ChiArts artist Josue Herrera looks at the intersections of social and natural ecologies and access with his work on the struggle against the installation of the Dakota Access Pipeline at Standing Rock. Herrera traveled to Standing Rock to document protests as a form of activist visual storytelling. The work of three student artists look back at different historical moments to elucidate their connections to current political events. Thalia Agosto, Raven Smith, and Zachary Huff employ tactics of empathetic identification to draw out legacies of resistance. Agosto and Smith create visionary self-portraits to connect their lived experiences with those of people who strove for equality in previous generations. Agosto, an artist of Puerto Rican and Native American background, casts herself as a Jewish girl during the Holocaust in a bid to relate. Smith’s self-portrait depicts the artist, herself a young black woman, as a member of the Black Panther Party to honor the impacts that earlier civil rights work had on the Black Lives Matter movement. Huff’s staged photograph attempts to tie the close range combat tactics used in World War I to the awful reality of police brutality against people of color in the US today. The two remaining artists consider the ways that our present actions map out the future to come. Youth artist Maya Halko’s work cautions against the loss of individuality in our consumer-focused society. Her drawing shows a central figure who appears to be part-person, part-assembly line mechanism to critique the prioritization of capitalist progress over people’s well-being. Conversely, the practice of Cheryl Pope exemplifies the very ethos of this exhibition. Pope works with members of her community here in Chicago, often youths, to respond to the inequities that impact their lives. Pope’s work often formally refers to the trappings of scholastic experience – classroom desks, varsity banners, school gyms – to convey explorations of identity in the spirit of coming-of-age, collaboration, mentorship, and liberation. Pope’s work posits the possibility of a brighter future through coalition amongst youth and adults.

Weinberg/Newton Gallery is thrilled to bring work by politically-engaged professional artists into conversation with that of students from the Chicago High School for the Arts. In the spirit of Mikva Challenge’s motto – democracy is a verb – Bold Disobedience displays expressions of dissent by artists both above and below the watermark of age eighteen to represent the ways that all people can participate in a democracy, can destabilize structures of oppression – can productively disobey.
LOCATION
Unless noted, events take place at Weinberg/Newton Gallery 300 W Superior Street, Suite 203 Chicago, IL 60654

All events are free and open to the public.

The gallery may be reached at 312 529 5090 or info@weinbergnewtongallery.com

**Bold Disobedience**

**OPENING RECEPTION**
FRIDAY, JUNE 23, 5–8 PM

**TEEN CONVENING**
SATURDAY, JULY 1, 12–2 PM
The gallery will host an invitation-only gathering of young curators and artists who work with various Chicago arts institutions, providing creative youth with a setting to discuss ways that art can express political resistance. Contact the gallery for more information.

**FUNDRAISER: YOUTH POWER = YOUTH PEACE**
THURSDAY, JULY 13, 6–8 PM
Join our partners from Mikva Challenge at the gallery to learn more about their work with youth in Chicago and nationally. Enjoy a guided tour of *Bold Disobedience* led by the youth curators who formed the exhibition. Tickets for this event will be available soon at mikvachallenge.org.

**CONVERSATION: YOUTH POWER = VIBRANT CITIES**
THURSDAY, JULY 20, 5–7 PM
Mikva Challenge will partner with the Chicago Architecture Foundation to host a conversation between authors of *No Small Plans*, a graphic novel that follows the neighborhood adventures of Chicago teens as they wrestle with designing the city they want, need, and deserve. Members of Eyes of the Cat illustration studio will discuss their experiences creating this work. Jacob Naszke, a teen from Jones College Prep who served as a curator of *Bold Disobedience*, will moderate the conversation, which will be followed by a book signing and a gallery tour.

**PANEL: YOUTH POWER = STRONGER IDENTITIES, STRONGER SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING SKILLS**
THURSDAY, AUGUST 3, 4–6 PM
Gather for a panel discussion on civics, identity development, and the adolescent brain with guest speakers who are experts in this field. Susan Crown Exchange will sponsor the event and shed light on the importance of social and emotional learning in teens. Panelist details are forthcoming.
THALIA AGOSTO was born in Chicago as the first of four children. She is of Puerto Rican and Native American heritage, and takes interest in many cultures. Her work in Bold Disobedience draws on the traumatic history of the Holocaust, and she uses self-portraiture to imagine herself as a young Jewish girl during that time. Referencing censorship and erasure through book burning, she uses materials that reinforce the destruction of self and culture. Agosto was recently awarded a Gold Key in Drawing through the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards and is currently attending the Chicago High School for the Arts.
NATALIE APARICIO currently resides in the Pilsen neighborhood of Chicago. She graduated from the Chicago High School for the Arts in 2017, where she garnered multidisciplinary training. Her work confronts the issue of gentrification in the Pilsen community, an area of Chicago known for its rich Latino culture. While she documents the slow eradication of the neighborhood's history, she also confronts the prevalence of gun violence in the area. Her installation *Altar* demonstrates the intersection of these issues. Inspired by the style of Dia de los Muertos altars, she stages objects and materials associated with Pilsen around the image of Jeff Maldanado Jr., a local teen who was shot and killed in 2009. Aparicio is currently dedicated to the J-Def Peace Project and her upcoming summer internship at the National Museum of Mexican Art. She will be attending the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in the fall of 2017.
Evan Calabrese was born in Chicago and graduated from the Chicago High School for the Arts, Visual Arts Conservatory, with a concentration in photography in May 2017. His work celebrates a diversity of gender identities and sexual orientations. Motivated by his personal experience as an African American gay male with two queer parents, he aims to not only document LGBTQ culture, but to also represent African American males in a positive light, contrasting prevalent negative, hypermasculine representations. Calabrese plans to pursue a career in photography and graphic design.

Image: Evan Calabrese, Alex and Telan, Archival Inkjet Print, 2017
ANGELA DAVIS FEGAN is a native of Chicago’s South Side. She originated her ongoing Lavender Menace poster project in 2015. A graduate of Chicago’s famed Whitney Young High School, she received her BFA in Fine Arts from New York’s Parson’s School of Design and her MFA in Interdisciplinary Book and Paper Arts from Columbia College Chicago. Fegan has mounted shows in Chicago at the University of Illinois at Chicago’s Montgomery Ward Gallery, Galerie F, Chicago Artists’ Coalition, the DePaul Art Museum, and the Hyde Park Art Center, and at the Center for Book Arts (New York). Her work has been selected for book covers including How to Seduce a White Boy in Ten Easy Steps by Laura Yes Yes, The Truth About Dolls by Jamila Woods, Secondhand by Maya Marshall, Where Brooklyn At by Roger Bonair–Agard and the upcoming All Blue So Late by Laura Swearingen–Steadwell. Her work has been written about in The Offing (LA Review of Books), Hyperallergic, Chicago Magazine, the RedEye and the Chicago Reader.
MAYA HALKO uses visual narratives and playful colors to explore identity and the human experience under conditions of advanced capitalism. She incorporates surreal imagery into her work to question how politics and consumerism affect our very conception of what it means to be people. Born and raised in Chicago, she attends the Chicago High School for the Arts and majors in Drawing and Painting.

IMAGE: MAYA HALKO, HUNGRY HUNGRY HUMANS, PENCIL ON CANVAS, 2017
JOSUE HERRERA is a scholar–artist majoring in photography at the Chicago High School for the Arts. Growing up in a politically engaged family, Herrera was exposed to different struggles for justice. His artwork reflects such activist passions. He makes documentary style photographs of people across the city of Chicago, with a focus on capturing images of protest marches and acts of resistance. Herrera's photographic practice is founded on an ethos of value, respect, and support for the multi-faceted nature of the fight for equality.
ZACHARY HUFF is a sophomore at the Chicago High School for the Arts in the Visual Arts conservatory. He majors in photography and has additional passion for drawing and graphic design. Born and raised in Chicago, Huff has been making art as a means of self-expression since he was eight years old. His work in *Bold Disobedience* attempts to draw a parallel between the close range combat tactics used in World War I to the awful reality of police brutality against people of color in the US today.

JACLYN JACUNSKI is a Chicago–based artist and has recently completed the BOLT Residency at the Chicago Artists Coalition. Her works take on various formats, from printmaking to installation to sculpture, and deals with themes of community and its boundaries. Her practice draws inspiration from protests and acts of resistance in local communities. Jacunski has an MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and a BFA from the University of Wisconsin, Madison and has taught at SAIC and Harrington College of Design. She worked for many years as an assistant to the master printers at Tandem Press in Madison. She currently works at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago at the Earl and Brenda Shapiro Center for Research and Collaboration, promoting artist-led research and culture. She has shown work in Chicago at Lillstreet Art Center, Spudnik Press, Ukrainian Institute of Modern Art, The Franklin, Comfort Station, and Hyde Park Art Center.

IMAGE: JACLYN JACUNSKI, START TOGETHER, INSTALLATION VIEW, 2016
KUUMBA LYNX is an urban arts youth development organization founded in 1996 by three women: Jaquanda Villegas, Leida Garcia–Mukwacha, and Jacinda Bullie. For two decades, alongside many of Chicago’s artists, activists, educators, and youth communities, Kuumba Lynx has honed an arts–making practice that presents, preserves, and promotes hip hop as a tool to reimagine and demonstrate a more just world. Kuumba Lynx creates performances and productions, film screenings, artmaking workshops and residencies, youth artist apprenticeships, community cultural events and praxi sharing, all rooted in an indigenous culture of urban artistry and activism. Annually, Kuumba Lynx’s Hip Hop Arts Programs support and create opportunities for over 1,000 participants. The Hip Hop Arts Program incorporates ritual, writing, freestyle, dance, beatbox, spoken word, music production, DJing, graffiti art, photography, video and more. Facilitating programs in Uptown, Little Village, and Austin among other Chicago communities, Kuumba Lynx works with young people ages 8–25 years old.

IMAGE: KUUMBA LYNX’S CHICAGO TEEN HIP HOP THEATER ENSEMBLE, 2016
Yvette Mayorga is an interdisciplinary artist and educator. She uses confection, industrial materials, and the American board game Candy Land as a conceptual framework to juxtapose the borderlands of the US and Mexico. The spaces in the “Candy Lands” of her work relate to immigrant utopian visions of the American Dream. The smell, decoration, and personal photographs in Mayorga's work critique the glut of violence at the border. Mayorga has presented her work at the Vincent Price Art Museum (Los Angeles), the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, EXPO Chicago, the National Museum of Mexican Art (Chicago), and Grand Valley State University (Allendale, MI). Mayorga has forthcoming Chicago–based exhibitions at Gallery 400, The Arts Incubator, and Roots and Culture. She received her MFA in Fiber and Material Studies from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Her work has been featured in The Guardian, the Chicago Latino ArTchive of the Inter–University Program for Latino Research, Art News, and REMEZCLA.
CHERYL POPE is a visual artist focused in sculpture, installation, and performance. Her work questions and responds to issues of identity as it relates to the individual and the community, specifically in regards to race, gender, class, history, power and place. Her practice emerges from the act and politics of listening. Pope received her BFA and MD from the School of the Art Institute Chicago, where she is now a full time Professor in the Fashion Department. She is represented by Monique Meloche Gallery in Chicago and Galleria Bianconi in Milan. Pope studied under the artist Nick Cave for twelve years, was a teaching artist at the Museum of Contemporary Art for seven years, and worked in multiple community based organizations throughout Chicago since 2003. After winning the Chicago Golden Gloves Boxing Tournament in 2014, Pope continues to train and teach boxing to youth in communities and to adults at SOHO House Chicago.
PRISON + NEIGHBORHOOD ARTS PROJECT is a visual arts and humanities project that connects teaching artists and scholars to men at Stateville Maximum Security Prison through classes, workshops and guest lectures. Classes offered include subjects ranging from poetry, visual arts, and film study to political theory, social studies, and history. Classes are held once a week, on a 14 week semester schedule. Each course results in finished projects – visual art, creative writing and critical essays – with specific audiences and neighborhoods in mind. These works are then exhibited and read in neighborhood galleries and cultural centers. The goal of P+NAP is to foster exploratory thinking amongst incarcerated students at Stateville, who have a wealth of knowledge and keen perspectives to share about the world around us. Artist Sarah Ross serves as Program Coordinator and Teaching Artist for P+NAP.
SARAH ROSS is an artist who works in sculpture, video, and photo. Her projects use narrative and the body to address spatial concerns as they relate to access, class, anxiety, and activism. Sarah also works collaboratively with other artists on projects such as Compass (of the Midwest Radical Cultural Corridor), Regional Relationships, Chicago Justice Torture Memorials, and Prison + Neighborhood Arts Project. She has co–curated exhibitions at SPACES Gallery (Cleveland), Sea and Space Explorations (Los Angeles), and PS122 (New York). She teaches at The School of the Art Institute Chicago and is a co–organizer of Prison + Neighborhood Arts Project, an arts and humanities initiative at Stateville Prison. Ross is the recipient of grants from the Propeller Fund, Graham Foundation, University of California Institute for Research in the Arts, and the Illinois Arts Council. Her work has been exhibited in venues such as the Armory (Pasadena), Gallery 727 (Los Angeles), PS122 (New York), Roots and Culture Gallery (Chicago), Pinkard Gallery (Baltimore), META Cultural Foundation (Romania), and the Canadian Center for Architecture (Montreal).
DREAD SCOTT first received national attention in 1989 when his art became a center of controversy over its use of the American flag while he was a student at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. President G.H.W. Bush called his art “disgraceful” and the entire US Senate denounced and outlawed this work. His work has been included in recent exhibitions at MoMA PS1 (New York), the Walker Art Center (Minneapolis), the Brooklyn Museum, and the Whitney Museum of American Art (New York). In 2012, the Brooklyn Academy of Music presented his performance Dread Scott: Decision as part of their 30th Anniversary Next Wave Festival. His work is in the collections of the Whitney Museum and the Akron Art Museum. Scott is a recipient of grants from the Creative Capital Foundation, the MAP Fund, and the Pollock Krasner Foundation. He works in a range of media including performance, photography, screen-printing, and video. Scott plays with fire — metaphorically and sometimes literally — as when he burned $171 on Wall Street and encouraged those with money to burn to add theirs to the pyre.
RAVEN SMITH is a student at the Chicago High School for the Arts in the Visual Arts conservatory. She uses her artwork to express the frustrations of discrimination that African Americans deal with on a daily basis as a result of the legacy of systemic racism in the US. She finds inspiration in the activist efforts of earlier generations of black women, specifically those involved with the Black Panther Party. Her work connects earlier generations' struggles for racial justice to those of black youth today.

IMAGE: RAVEN SMITH, BLACK RESIDUE, CHARCOAL ON PAPER, 2017
Mikva Challenge was founded on the premise that youth voice and participation matter, and that our civic and political life will be stronger when youth participate and help shape their own destinies. Our three main program areas – Youth Policy Making, Electoral Engagement and Community Problem Solving – involve young people in civic engagement through a hands-on, project-based learning approach called Action Civics, a process that deeply transforms students’ civic attitudes, skills, and sense of agency.

Youth, especially youth of color, are experts on the issues and matters that impact them deeply in their everyday lives. From what they’re learning in schools to issues of community safety, their experiences as young Chicagoans position them to develop and advocate for solutions necessary to creating meaningful change. At Mikva Challenge, we invite youth to be at the decision-making table with political and community leaders, and empower them to find their voice and take action on issues they feel passionately about.

We’re extremely grateful to the Weinberg/Newton Gallery for being champions of youth voice and providing Mikva Challenge youth with the opportunity to curate this exhibit. We are excited to share how Chicago youth are leaders in their community and deeply invested in making their schools and communities vibrant, healthy, and safe.

Democracy is a verb.

Michelle Morales
CEO, Mikva Challenge
Weinberg/Newton Gallery is an exhibition space with a mission to educate and inform the public on social justice issues. Through artwork and programming the gallery provides an engaging environment for discourse on critical contemporary issues facing our communities. Connecting artists with social justice organizations, the gallery works to drive change and cultivate a culture of consciousness.

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Monday – Saturday 10 AM – 5 PM

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