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[Pindell at Victoria-Miro](#)

## Howardena Pindell (American, b. 1943)

Watch Pindell [at work at the Brandywine Print Workshop](#) in Philadelphia in 2011, where she completed [a portfolio of new work](#). Pindell reflected on her process, materials, and career trajectory, in a [2012 oral history](#) with Smithsonian Archives of American Art which picked up from the first interview [conducted in 1972](#).

In [an intimate conversation](#) with scholars and curators at Art Basel in 2016, Pindell discussed her innovative use of materials and supports, relationships with feminist and civil rights movement, mentorship from critic Lucy Lippard, and experiences as a Black women artist in Boston, Yale, and New York.

The first major survey of Pindell's career in the U.S. was presented by the [Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago](#) and the [Virginia Museum of Fine Arts](#) in 2018. Early figurative painting, conceptual and political works, film, performance, and mixed-media collages explored the trajectory of her practice since the 1960s, with a wealth of [digital resources and scholarship](#). Pindell also [spoke in Chicago](#) with curators Naomi Beckwith and Valerie Cassel Oliver about her life, treatment in school, work, and what she called "the best museum experience I've ever had."

"I love controlled chaos: I love the way it looks, the drama, the things juxtaposing with one another. Also, to hold the eye through beauty, to notice one thing next to another. I want to have a sense of inside and outside," [Pindell told BOMB Magazine](#) in a 2018 interview about her process and artistic influences.

In 2019, [Garth Greenan Gallery](#) presented its first display of Pindell's work [since 2016](#). The new show displayed [Autobiography](#), a mixed-media series created between 1980 and 1995 that reflects on the aftermath and mental impact of a 1979 car accident, which left Pindell with short-term memory loss.



Pindell in New York, ca. 1970  
Photography: Garth Greenan Gallery

Also in 2019, Victoria Miro paired Pindell's mature three-dimensional collages with early large-scale *spray paintings* from the 1970s, which she created by spraying paint through hole-punched paper and cardboard supports, for the artist's [first solo exhibition in the UK](#).

"I began to use hands in my work because they have carried such significance throughout history...I started doing more research: I wanted to express my opinions in my work and to encourage people to think about things they either didn't know or didn't want to contemplate," Pindell commented in a [2019 conversation with Frieze Masters](#) magazine about her experiences as a student at Yale and a curator at MoMA in the 1960s and 70s, her career teaching at Stony Brook University, and her own practice through it all. "I became far more aggressive about my opinions and was able to translate that passion into visual form."

Pindell presented her first video piece in 25 years at [The Shed in New York](#) from autumn 2020 through spring 2021. The culmination of fifty years of work, first commissioned by The Shed in the 1970s, the film used archival footage of nonviolent protests against lynching in Alabama. "The whole history of this country is one of violence," [reflected Pindell in a brief interview](#) about the exhibition. "This is a good time to have this imagery out there because of the state of our nation. Things are being done that brings us back decades....this show is almost like a library of African American history."



Pindell, 2017 Photo: Nathan Keay

Howardena Pindell (American, b. 1943)

**Untitled**, 1978

Mixed media on canvas

Private Collection; L2021:70.1

Trained as a painter, Howardena Pindell became the first black female curator at the Museum of Modern Art in 1967. Pindell continued painting while working in MoMA's Department of Prints and Illustrated Books, developing a mixed-media practice centered on themes of deconstruction and reconstruction.

**Untitled** is one of the earliest examples of Pindell's stitching technique with strips of painted canvas. The artist leaves subtle traces of her labor with unconventional material; her punched-out paper dots, sprinkled glitter, and spritzed perfume all insist on a sensory experience with the artwork. Reflecting a surge in late-career attention to Pindell's prolific oeuvre, this painting was recently included in major exhibitions at the Tate, MCA Chicago, and Rose Art Museum.

*On view September 8 – December 12, 2021*

