

15 WOMEN ARTISTS WHO ARE CHANGING THEIR WORLD—AND OURS

Whether they make art or they buy, sell, collect, or "incubate" it, these 15 renegades share both an eye for beauty and a piercing awareness of that which is not beautiful—in ourselves, in society, even in the supposedly freewheeling sphere of art. Their mission: make sure we see it, too.



BY MOLLY LANGMUIR AND CURATED BY CARY LEITZES
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BLACK ART INCUBATOR | THE AWAKENERS



Clockwise from left: Jessica Lynne, Taylor Renee Aldridge, Jessica Bell Brown, and Kimberly Drew Front row, Lynne wears: Pinstripe tank, HELMUT LANG, \$345, visit helmutlang.com. Lambskin trousers, ADAM LIPPES, \$2,250. Her own rings. Drew wears: Knit top, \$1,340, skirt, \$2,235, both, MISSONI, visit missoni.com. Her own jewelry. Back row, Aldridge wears: Cotton and silk top, MARNI, \$1,690, at Marni boutiques nationwide. Bell Brown wears: Mink coat, HELLESSY, \$11,500, visit hellessy.com. Pleated dress, ISSEY MIYAKE, \$1,880. Vermeil necklace, CHARLOTTE CHESNAIS, \$1,870. Suede sandals, DEREK LAM, \$1,050. Her own rings.

MARTIN MULDER

For 35 days this past summer, the Lower East Side storefront gallery Recess housed what was billed as a "social sculpture": a series of grant-writing workshops, art critiques, a book swap, even a potluck. Titled the Black Art Incubator, it was the brainchild of four women—Kimberly Drew, 26, social media manager at the Metropolitan Museum of Art; Jessica Bell Brown, 29, a research fellow at MoMA; and two arts administrators/critics, Jessica Lynne and Taylor Renee Aldridge, both 27—who share a passion for art world inclusivity, along with a very millennial willingness to "create spaces for what we want immediately, rather than waiting for someone to give them to us," Lynne says. To that end: Drew founded the Tumblr blog *Black Contemporary Art*; Lynne and Aldridge cofounded online arts journal *Arts.Black* to give voice to more critics of color. As for the Incubator, the goal was nothing less than laying the groundwork for a more equitable system. And while the month's programming was focused around normalizing blackness in the arts, it was open to all. "We were just thinking about what we would want as young black women," Lynne says. So they built in self-care via a day of yoga and meditation, something that felt particularly necessary given the timing—the Incubator began a week after Alton Sterling and Philando Castile were killed by police. "We were fortunate to be working in a way that recognizes that trauma can manifest invisibly," Lynne says. "How do you stay sane amid state-sanctioned violence? Taking care of oneself is so essential in producing work." "I was struck by their ambition," says Adrienne Edwards, a Performa curator who led a critique at the Incubator. "This had a dimension around healing, energetic exchange, and community building that was really special. What does it mean to claim these activities as art? That's a profound suggestion, I think. Or even a profound offering."

Photographed by Martin Mulder; styled by Sarah Schussheim; hair by Martin-Christopher Harper at Platform NYC for Oribe Hair Care; makeup by Cedric Jolivet; produced by wanted-media.com; fashion assistant: Javon Drake

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