

Art World (<https://news.artnet.com/art-world>)

Black Lives Take Center Stage at College Art Association's 2017 Conference

MacArthur "genius" Kellie Jones will be there.

Brian Boucher (<https://news.artnet.com/about/brian-boucher-244>), December 8, 2016



Among the speakers at CAA's 2017 conference is Kellie Jones, 2016 MacArthur Fellow. Courtesy John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

The [College Art Association \(http://www.collegeart.org/\)](http://www.collegeart.org/) (CAA), the century-old organization catering to art historians and artists, has revealed the program for its 2017 conference, and current topics like race and politics are at the forefront.

Long before the Black Lives Matter movement had become a force around the country, CAA president Hunter O'Hanian points out in a phone interview, "CAA had always taken an advocacy role, fostering discussions about feminism, diversity, and queer lives."

Taking place at the New York Hilton Midtown from February 15–18, the conference will offer some 270 sessions, far more than in previous years since session times have been trimmed from three hours to just 90 minutes. This year, 4,000 attendees are expected to show up, O'Hanian says.



Also speaking at CAA this year is Coco Fusco, here in costume as Dr. Zira from the Planet of the Apes. Photo Gene Pittman, courtesy Walker Art Center.

Among the notable offerings this year:

MacArthur “genius” Kellie Jones, Columbia art historian, will appear on a panel with New York University’s Deborah Willis and Cornell University’s Cheryl Finley in [a discussion of social movements from emancipation to Black Lives Matter](http://conference.collegeart.org/programs/picturing-social-movements-from-emancipation-to-black-lives-matter/) (<http://conference.collegeart.org/programs/picturing-social-movements-from-emancipation-to-black-lives-matter/>).

There's also a [panel discussion](http://conference.collegeart.org/programs/public-art-in-the-era-of-black-lives-matter/) about public art in the Black Lives Matter era, featuring Evie Terrono, of Virginia's Randolph-Macon College, speaking on challenges to the authority of the Confederate flag.



Another participant is art historian Kaja Silverman. Photo Theo Mullen, courtesy College Art Association.

Politics and current events are at the forefront in a [discussion](http://conference.collegeart.org/programs/when-art-claims-to-do-good-assessing-the-impact-of-socially-engaged-art/) about whether socially engaged art has an impact beyond the art world, in which independent scholar Elizabeth Driscoll Smith will discuss For Freedoms, an [artist-founded political action committee](https://news.artnet.com/market/artist-political-action-committee-441083).

The organization aims to strengthen its offerings to artists as well, with a [day-long professional training program](http://conference.collegeart.org/programs/the-artist-as-entrepreneur-all-day-program/) hosted by the New York Foundation for the Arts.

Tapping into serial controversies at art museums is a discussion on navigating public opposition to institutional exhibitions, touching on subjects like [the recent Kelley Walker exhibition at the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis](https://news.artnet.com/art-world/kelley-walker-st-louis-cam-boycott-667172), which led to [a curator's resignation](https://news.artnet.com/art-world/jeffrey-uslip-resigns-cam-st-louis-695564).

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