

WIBA

August 5, 2015

New Young Lords Exhibition Spotlights Women Who Led The Movement

By Marjua Estevez



Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale's Black Panther Party gave rise to lesser-known radical groups such as the Young Lords. Like so many other male-dominated militant entities, the Young Lords were inherently sexist and proved so when the organization first promoted a form of machismo in their original statement of purpose. That declaration was later replaced after some of the group's women activists reacted in opposition.

“The women of the Young Lords led an internal struggle in the organization on the persistence of sexism within its ranks, out of which they secured a role for women in the organization’s leadership body,” professor of History at Baruch College and co-curator Johanna Fernandez told *VIBE Viva*. “They struck ‘Revolutionary Machismo’ from the group’s 13-point program and platform, replacing it with ‘Down with Machismo and Male Chauvinism.’”

The words “We want equality for women. Down with machismo and male chauvinism.” are splayed across the [Bronx Museum](#), where the first-ever visual exposition of the role of women in the Young Lords now lives. *¡Presente! The Young Lords in New York* gives prominence to a little-known fact about the Puerto Rican revolutionaries: their unique politics included both nationalism and feminism.

The women involved in the struggle would go on to launch an aggressive campaign to reeducate men and women to defy socially prescribed gender roles. The initiative culminated in one of the most comprehensible theoretical papers of the 1960s on the oppression of women of color: an outline of the history of gender oppression, particularly among Puerto Rican women.

“[It] proposed a comprehensive reproductive rights program, calling for access to quality public healthcare, free childcare, community control of abortion clinics, and safe contraception options,” Professor Fernandez added. “They also launched the Women’s Union to bring more women of color into the social justice movement and produced *La Luchadora*, a newspaper by women for women.”

In addition to the exhibit, a forum was held featuring eight women of the Young Lords. Each told her personal story of struggle for a revolutionary society. This marked the first public conversation of its kind.

—
¡Presente! The Young Lords in New York will be exhibited at *The Bronx Museum of the Arts* (July 2 – October 18, 2015), *El Museo del Barrio* (July 22 – October 17, 2015), and *Loisaida Inc.* (July 30 – October 10, 2015). The initiative will include public and educational programs across partnering venues to build awareness of the Young Lords’ innovative contributions to the struggle for civil rights and influence on contemporary artists, and to spark conversations about grassroots community activism today. The institutions partnering in *¡Presente! The Young Lords in New York* are all located in neighborhoods where the Young Lords were most active, and each exhibition reflects on the Young Lords’ activities in that part of the City.

SLIDESHOW IMAGES



Caecilia Tripp
Video still from "Music for (prepared) Bicycles," Score Two New York, Brooklyn/Spanish Harlem/The Bronx, 2013
HD video, 14 minutes
Courtesy of the artist



The Young Lords Organization
Cover of *Palante* newspaper (Volume 2, Number 7, July 17, 1970)
Newsprint
Courtesy of Tamiment Library & Robert F Wagner Labor Archives, New York University



Fred W. McDarrah
Pablo Guzman, Yoruba of the Young Lords, c. 1968
Vintage gelatin silver
Bronx Museum of the Arts
Purchased with funds from the Ford Foundation
2013.10



Maximo Colon
Untitled, c. 1970
Digital print
Courtesy of Maximo Colon



Michael Abramson
Untitled (Iris Morales, Denise Oliver, and other Young Lords), c. 1970
Black and white photograph
11 x 14 inches
Courtesy of the artist



Miguel Luciano
Machetero Air Force One's (Filiberto Ojeda Uptowns), 2007
Vinyl and acrylic on sneakers
Courtesy of the artist



Raphael Montañez Ortiz
Archeological Find #21: The Aftermath, 1961
Destroyed sofa, wood, cotton, vegetable fiber, wire, and glue on wooden backing
The Bronx Museum of the Arts
Purchased with funds from the Ford Foundation
2013.17



Shepard Fairey
Visual Disobedience, 2004
Screenprint on paper
Edition 8/300
18 x 24 inches
Courtesy of Shepard Fairey/OBEY Giant Art



The Bronx Museum of the Arts exhibition *¡Presente! The Young Lords in New York*. Installation view of *Palante* (2015) and *Women of the Young Lords* (2015) by Sophia Dawson. Photo by Vanessa S. Clifton.



Sophia Dawson
Palante, 2015
Acrylic and collage on canvas
66 x 90 inches
Courtesy of the artist



Sophia Dawson
Sistahz, 2015
Acrylic and collage on canvas
64 x 72 inches
Courtesy of the artist



Sophia Dawson
Women of the Young Lords, 2015
Acrylic and collage on canvas
42 x 64 inches
Courtesy of the artist



'Vine pa' echar candela' (I came to cast a blaze) an installation inspired by the Bronx office of the Young Lords by artist and curator of education at the Bronx Museum, Hatuey Ramos-Fermin, in collaboration with curator Johanna Fernandez, 2015. Photo by Hatuey Ramos-Fermin.