

# WIDE RAINBOW LESSONS: Artist Lorraine O'Grady

## ARTIST INTRO:

Lorraine O'Grady is an American artist and critic. She is a native of Boston, MA and daughter of Caribbean immigrant parents. She is a conceptual and performance artist working with photography, video installation, and text. Her artwork explores the cultural construction of identity while addressing issues of diaspora, hybridity and black female subjectivity. She has served as an intelligence analyst for the United States government, a literary and commercial translator, and rock music critic. She turned her focus to visual arts in the late 1970s and has since become an active voice within New York art world over the past three decades.

She has an extensive archive of text and writings that can be <http://lorraineogrady.com/>

## LORRAINE O'GRADY'S PERFORMANCE: ART IS... (1983)



## **WORKSHOP:**

*Let's "frame" the world around us by taking photographs & notes inspired by Lorraine O'Grady and turning our own neighborhoods into works of art!*

1. Find a discarded or recycled empty frame (the bigger the better) OR Create your own frame with recycled cardboard boxes or a large sheet of paper & scissors
2. Go outside and bring your frame with you while you explore your neighborhood
3. Invite friends, family, and neighbors you encounter to become *works of art*
4. Take a portrait of them with camera or your phone's camera (if you have one) standing behind the  
*You can also just take a mental portrait w/out a camera*
5. Ask them what 'art is...' to them and write the answers down into your notebook
6. After you finish exploring your neighborhood take a look at all the photos you took and the notes you wrote from each participant.
7. Share these photos and the ideas that you gathered with each participant (if you can) but also find a special place to archive or keep these notes/photos to look back on in the future. Like a time capsule.
8. After reviewing and sharing everything you collected - what do you think *art is?*

## **MATERIALS:**

- Found or recycled empty frame
- Found Cardboard
- Large Paper
- Scissors
- Camera phone or any camera

*(This activity can also be performed and not documented w/ camera)*

- Notebook & pen or pencil



**“Speaking was a demand that the (art) work made on me, and that increasing interactions with others made on me. I learned so much each time I had to find a way to talk about the work.”**

**- Lorraine O'Grady**



**FOLLOW UP:**

Before you started this project what did was your definition of art? *Art is...*

When you went out into your neighborhood with an empty frame did you begin to look at it differently? What did you see?

Who did you encounter and invite to participate?

How did you explain to them that they were a *work of art*? Did the empty frame help?

Who choose to participate?

Did you enjoy taking portraits? Or did you like asking them what *art is* and taking notes instead?

Did you end up having other conversations about the neighborhood, your community, or the world around you? What other notes did you take?

After the project and looking over all your photos and notes – did your idea about what *art is* change?

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**[www.widerainbow.org](http://www.widerainbow.org)**