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Fired Up! Ready to Go!: Finding Beauty, Demanding Equity: An African American Life in Art. The Collections of Peggy Cooper Cafritz by Peggy Cooper Cafritz (review)

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In one of the most original and valuable essays, Brian Norman explores Baldwin's views on black masculinity in the late 1960s and early '70s in relation to the women's liberation movement. Norman posits in "Crossing Identitarian Lines: Women's Liberation and James Baldwin's Early Essays" that, "[b]y examining how and why Baldwin played a key role in the development of many women's liberationists, we can appreciate how he is able to travel across sharp lines within twentieth-century literary and political identitarian traditions" (248). By exploring Baldwin's work as proto-feminist, even—and especially—when it is unexpected, Norman argues that "in Baldwin's essays, . . . it is precisely in the most intimate spaces—the psyche, sexual interaction, personal experience—where political change is possible" (264).

As Ulf Schulenberg observes in "Where the People Can Sing, the Poet Can Live: James Baldwin, Pragmatism, and Cosmopolitan Humanism," despite the renaissance in Baldwin studies, he is absent from discussion about American pragmatism. Placing Baldwin in the context of recent works of pragmatism by Cornel West and Walton M. Muyumba, Schulenberg convincingly argues that the author collapses the distinctions between interior and exterior lives, reading him as a humanist concerned with collective and individual responsibility. Baldwin's discussion of individualism is further explored by Jack Turner in "Baldwin's Individualism and the Critique of Property," who rightly points out that Baldwin "invariably condemns 'liberals,' not *liberalism*" (306; original emphasis).

The final three essays use Baldwin's work to reevaluate the recent state-sanctioned violence against black bodies. In "James Baldwin on Violence and Disavowal," Lisa Beard considers why so many commentators and social media users are turning to Baldwin the wake of Black Lives Matter protests through a compelling reading of the author's writing on violence. In "James Baldwin and Black Lives Matter," one of the most engaging essays, Eddie S. Glaude, Jr. provides a thoughtful overview of Black Lives Matter while thinking "about Baldwin a kind of exemplar of a perfectionist tradition that takes shape under the conditions of domination" (362). The volume concludes with Rachel Brahinsky's essay, "Tell Him I'm Gone: On the Margins in High-Tech City," which revisits the documentary *Take This Hammer* (1963) in which Baldwin, interviewed in San Francisco, "commented on the crumbling geographies of liberally inclined cities like this one" (373). Brahinsky's original and compelling essay situates Baldwin's views in the context of urban renewal programs to formulate a politics of place.

A Political Companion to James Baldwin is a refreshing and welcome addition to scholarship on the author. By viewing Baldwin as a writer concerned with individualism, democracy, women's rights, civil rights, and sexual difference, the essays enrich an understanding of life and work, illustrating the ways in which his fiction and nonfiction cuts across different disciplines in new and engaging ways.

Peggy Cooper Cafritz. *Fired Up! Ready to Go!: Finding Beauty, Demanding Equity: An African American Life in Art. The Collections of Peggy Cooper Cafritz.* New York: Rizzoli Electa, 2018. 288 pp. \$75.00.

Reviewed by Michelle Joan Wilkinson, Smithsonian National Museum of African American History & Culture

This book has a long title, but it is necessary. *Fired Up! Ready to Go!* is more than a survey of the "the collections of Peggy Cooper Cafritz," the long-time supporter of contemporary African American and African diaspora artists, whose

initial collection was destroyed in a fire in 2009. The book is also a chronicle of institution-building and arts advocacy. And, most memorably, it is a biography told through Cooper Cafritz's words, her art, and the recollections of her art world friends.

For beginners, a standard question might be, "Who is Peggy Copper Cafritz?" "She is a terrestrial constellation connecting stars across galaxies in the fine art universe" (203), writes artist Hank Willis Thomas. Willis Thomas gives us this imaginative response after first describing Cooper Cafritz as both a "legend" and a "force of nature." With "constellation," Willis Thomas aimed for something more visual and unbound that could convey the potency of Cooper Cafritz's reach.

While few black art cognoscenti would need to ask who Cooper Cafritz is, seldom few may know the legend beyond her defining roles as the founder of the Duke Ellington School for the Arts in Washington, D.C.; as a co-chair of the Cultural Equity Committee of the Smithsonian; and as an avid collector of African American, African, and Caribbean artists. That is why this book is so necessary.

Every page is a gift. Every sentence a revelation. The images provide their own wondrous provocation. But it is Cooper Cafritz's pointed storytelling that solidifies this volume's place in African American art history and black biography/memoir.

Readers are rewarded from the beginning with "Soul Memories," Cooper Cafritz's first-person essay—a substantive, straight-ahead dive into how she developed into the passionate advocate and institution builder renowned in the national arts community. As Cooper Cafritz details, her upbringing in segregated Mobile, Alabama was framed by "everything separate, everyone separated, every place we could not go, every event we could not attend. Everything a fight" (23). The college-educated Cooper family lived surrounded by books and art. A Georges Braque print hung in their dining room, and whenever bored, Cooper Cafritz looked to it to whet her imagination. There was a children's library in their family room, but she preferred venturing into her father's private library, which had a section of books by and about black people, alongside classics of the Western canon.

Her political education was far-ranging. On one occasion, the Coopers welcomed Martin Luther King, Jr. to their home where he would inscribe his latest book, *Strive Toward Freedom*, for the impressionable sixth grader—a memorable event for a girl who was already developing a fire in her belly against injustice. On another occasion, she met Gordon Parks who had been taking photos of poverty in Mobile. The conditions incensed her. Cooper Cafritz explains that such experiences during childhood "probably coalesced the anger and the creativity, because my creativity has never been separated from my political anger" (253), she says.

In the intimacies of Cooper Cafritz's story—often told in her own words or those of individuals who were very close to her—we begin to understand "a life," as the lengthy title indicates. We go with her to boarding school, university, and law school. We learn about brothers and sisters, and fellow students. There is not much detail about her marriage to and divorce from Conrad Cafritz, but we learn about her children—fostered, birthed, and adopted. Cooper Cafritz details her "spectacularly lucky professional life" in contrast to a series of brutal and tortuous events that left her an "emotional wreck" in her twenties (33). Art brought her comfort in the tumultuous times.

Studying and settling in D.C. enhanced Cooper Cafritz's exposure to the arts and increased her ire about the absence of artists of color represented in major museums. In response, her walls became a safeguard against their erasure. But the home that had welcomed so many artists and become a salon for art itself was consumed in devastating fire in 2009. Cooper Cafritz lost all the art in the 15,000-square foot home, more than some three hundred works collected over decades. The book recounts the impact of the fire, although Cooper Cafritz refuses to dwell there too long. Instead the volume presents images of two hundred no longer

extant works, including pieces by Lorna Simpson, Glenn Ligon, and Yinka Shonibare. Sometimes, captions annotate her memories of a work or the potency of its loss, particularly if she could not replace it with a comparable example by the same artist.

Cooper Cafritz admits that the fire ruined her financially. In these frank moments—this one revealed in a conversation with Thelma Golden, director and chief curator of the Studio Museum in Harlem—the volume offers something priceless. She used the insurance money to buy more art quickly. Through collecting, Cooper Cafritz had sought to offer some permanence to black artists, but she shares, “the greatest violation of the fire was the wiping out of that permanence” (258). Cooper Cafritz’s new collection evidences her phoenix-like resurgence when she moved into a spacious but soon to be art-packed condo in D.C.—a change from the bucolic surroundings of the large single-family home she had occupied.

For readers attracted by Cooper Cafritz’s collection beyond her personal narrative, the book will not disappoint. There are captivating works by Kerry James Marshall, Lynette Boakeye-Yiadom, Kara Walker, Belkis Ayón Manso, Titus Kaphar, Noah Davis, and hundreds of others. Books with this much art are often gratifying for their visual pleasures, and that is the case here. But *Fired Up! Ready to Go!* is so much more than pretty pictures. Cooper Cafritz’s collection boasts beauty *and* truth, with artworks that are provocative conceptually from artists who Cooper Cafritz says “have a sense of history and politics.” She further credits her “gut, eye, mind, and heart” with guiding her collecting (257). Cooper Cafritz began collecting when she was a student, and likewise supported and nurtured artists early in their careers. Works by some former Duke Ellington students are included here, whether they are already well known like Hank Willis Thomas, gaining in recognition like Stan Squirewell, or because the collector believes they are destined to be.

Among the essayists is Uri McMillan, whose contribution is the most art historical of the bunch. McMillan covers the Afro-diasporic breadth and aesthetic predilections of Cooper Cafritz’s collection by keenly looking at some of the artists she chose collect, including Malick Sidibe, Deana Lawson, Kalup Linzy, Jacolby Satterwhite, Njideka Akunyili Crosby, and Toyin Ojih Odutola, among others. McMillan surmises that the majority of the collected artists do not share an identity as much as a “heterodox” sensibility that matches Cooper Cafritz’s roving eye.

Artist-friend Simone Leigh contributes a short chapter in which she invites fellow artists Crosby, Kaphar, LaToya Ruby Frazier, William Villalongo, and Tschabalala Self to offer reflections on their relationships with Cooper Cafritz. “Her collection should be considered not only from an art historical point of view; it is also a documentation of a series of relationships and support structures she has put in place that carve out a large swathe of the art of the African diaspora. I can’t imagine where we would be without her” (169), Leigh writes.

In a halting chapter, gallerist Jack Shainman recounts how he and Cooper Cafritz met and how their fast friendship bloomed. He was impressed by her independent thinking on art, her philanthropic spirit, and her commitment to cultural equity evidenced by civic appointments, including a turn as the D.C. school board president. But the most memorable thing about Shainman’s essay is how it begins: during a visit to Cooper Cafritz’s home one evening—he had brought her some extra materials for an artwork—they had stayed up late talking, after which he reinstalled the work and left for an early morning train back to New York. “Having promised to help create a database for Peggy’s work, I took the only existing memory stick documenting her collection,” Shainman writes. “The next day I received the news that Peggy’s house had burned to the ground” (233).

The memory stick in Shainman’s possession, and several loose-leaf binders of the collection that Cooper Cafritz had previously sent to Thelma Golden at the Studio Museum in Harlem, helped to reassemble the inventory of the works that were lost. This volume brings together images of those lost works with those newly

collected, forming relationships that could now only exist in print. Readers may wonder whether the book itself would have existed, if not for the loss of the initial collection. Cooper Cafritz desired to build permanence through acquiring art, and it is through the cultural recovery work of documenting her collection—in the form of this publication—that her singular contribution will be widely known and valued.

A celebration of both her art and her “collections,” as essayist Kerry James Marshall titles his contribution, the book also serves as an unplanned homage to the now late collector. On February 18, 2018, just days before *Fired Up! Ready to Go!* was released, Cooper Cafritz died. She had already created a legacy, but the book and its sweeping account of her life and her art provide a kind of intimacy that the word “legacy” doesn’t. As a volume focused on her decades of explorations, support, and advocacy in the arts, its images and storytelling are monumentally gratifying. However, the contributed essays now seem like ominous tributes.

“May I live to be 100” (153), Cooper Cafritz writes at the end of a long caption for a painting by Arcmanoro Niles, a former Duke Ellington student. The painting is titled *A Promise to Never Get Old*, because as Niles says, and Cooper Cafritz agrees, there is so much work left to do. The life in these pages exemplified how to do this work with power and grace, humility and empathy, but also with courage and fierceness—Fired Up, and Ready to Go.

The treasure of this book is the treasure that was her life. Dressed up as a stunning compendium of Cooper Cafritz’s collection, the book, like the woman, is a “constellation” connecting beauty, equity, art, and African American life—just like the title says.

Anke Ortlepp. *Jim Crow Terminals: The Desegregation of American Airports.* Athens: U of Georgia P, 2017. 216 pp. \$26.95.

Reviewed by Christopher Schaberg, Loyola University New Orleans

This fascinating study covers the history of the rise and fall of segregated airports in the U. S. South from the late 1940s to the early ’60s. Ortlepp “conceives of airport terminals as sites of conflict—as territories of confrontation over the renegotiation of racial identities in postwar America” (10). For civil rights activists, but also for African American travelers trying merely to exercise their citizenship and consumer status, “the airport terminal was new protest territory” (37). Tracing a series of legal cases and drawing on oral histories and government documents, Ortlepp paints a vivid picture of how civil rights debates played out inconsistently (and often indirectly) around the planning, construction, and operation of new terminals throughout the Southern United States in the postwar period.

Jim Crow Terminals complicates any easy linear notion of social progress with regard to the development of commercial air travel. The unfair treatment of passengers based on their skin color—enforced around airport restaurants, waiting areas, restrooms, and drinking fountains—reveals how local customs and ingrained political attitudes ensnared and tarnished the promises of smooth transit by air. The snapshots of mistreatment and racialized Othering are consistent with other more familiar civil rights flashpoints (such as buses), but the built environment of the airport exposes an intriguing irony. While white supremacists saw airports as more or less natural extensions of their local regions (and thereby places in which to automatically maintain segregated practices), zooming out slightly showed airports in their connective capacity to be exploding parochial regionalisms in favor of a