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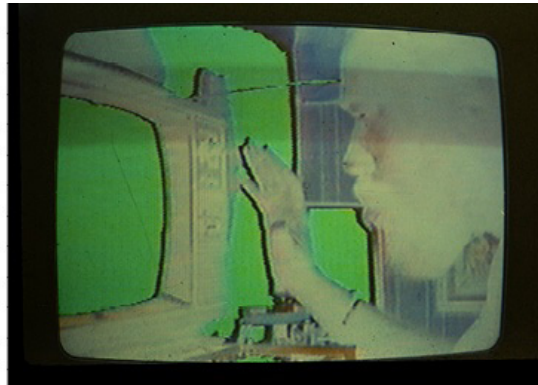
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**California African American Museum Presents  
KAOS Theory: The Afrokosmic Media Arts of Ben Caldwell  
at Art + Practice**

**Retrospective Illuminates Caldwell's Vision and Stewardship in  
Media Arts in Leimert Park and Beyond**



(Los Angeles, CA) — **The California African American Museum (CAAM) and Art + Practice (A+P)** announce the presentation of a retrospective highlighting the work of media arts innovator and community leader Ben Caldwell. The multimedia exhibition *KAOS Theory: The Afrokosmic Media Arts of Ben Caldwell* will be on view October 12, 2024–March 8, 2025 at A+P in Leimert Park.

Born in 1945 in New Mexico, Ben Caldwell is a dreamer from the desert who spent his youth gazing at the sky and watching his grandfather project films at a local movie theater. After being drafted and serving in the Vietnam War, Caldwell shed his gun for a camera and eventually landed in Los Angeles to pursue an MFA in film at UCLA, coming of age within the groundbreaking LA Rebellion film movement of the 1960s to 1980s.

Working closely with other Black filmmakers and educators, Caldwell envisioned cinema as an instrument that could heal and emancipate. In 1984, he opened KAOS Network, the media arts hub that has helped steward Leimert Park Village's traditions of Black artistry, fellowship, and love for over four decades.

Inspired by the award-winning book *KAOS Theory: The Afrokosmic Ark of Ben Caldwell*, this retrospective multimedia exhibition explores Caldwell's varied practices of photography, film, video, music, performance, community-based design, and interactive media and celebrates the creative life and communities of KAOS Network.

CAAM Executive Director Cameron Shaw said, "Ben Caldwell is an essential figure in Black Los Angeles—shaping art, cinema, and education from KAOS Network for the past 40 years. To be able to present his retrospective in Leimert Park where he has fostered his creativity and that of so many others is special and a unique alignment for the CAAM and A+P collaboration."

Adding to this, curator Jheanelle Brown said, "I've wanted to present a retrospective of Ben Caldwell's work for years. I was nursing this idea, and separately Caldwell and Robeson Taj Frazier were creating this love- and soul-filled book about Caldwell's life, work, and service. I feel lucky to present the expansive and pioneering work of my friend and mentor through this exhibition."

Curator Robeson Taj Frazier said, "With this exhibition, people will get a taste of Ben Caldwell's lifelong practice of artistry and imagination and his commitment to fostering spaces of creative fellowship and community for others. I'm excited to see how people will experience this, as well as some of the ideas, stories, and artwork from our book, in a gallery setting and in the neighborhood where much of it began."

*KAOS Theory: The Afrokosmic Media Arts of Ben Caldwell* is curated by Jheanelle Brown, independent curator, writer, and faculty of film/video at California Institute of the Arts, and Robeson Taj Frazier, author, producer, and professor of communication at the University of Southern California. This exhibition is co-presented by the California African American Museum (CAAM) and Art + Practice (A+P) as part of CAAM at A+P, a five-year collaboration.

### **Related Programming**

Tuesday, October 15, 2024 | 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. @ Art + Practice

**In Conversation: Ben Caldwell, Robeson Taj Frazier, and Jheanelle Brown**

Wednesday, November 6, 2024 | 7:30 – 8:30 p.m. @ Art + Practice

**Performance: Hollywatts**

Join us as interdisciplinary artists Mark Broyard, Ben Caldwell, Wesley Groves, Roger Guenveur Smith, and Vernon "King Oji" Vanoy come back together as Hollywatts for a special multimedia performance centering Black history and struggle.

Tuesday, December 10, 2024 | 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. @ Art + Practice

**Curatorial Walkthrough: The Afrokosmic Media Arts of Ben Caldwell**

### **About the California African American Museum**

CAAM explores the art, history, and culture of African Americans, with an emphasis on California and the West. Chartered by the State of California in 1977, the Museum began formal operations in 1981 and is a state-supported agency and a Smithsonian Affiliate. In addition to presenting exhibitions and public programs, CAAM houses a permanent collection of more than 5,000 works of art, artifacts, and historical documents, and a publicly accessible research library. Admission to CAAM is free.

Museum hours: Tuesday–Saturday 10 a.m.–5 p.m., Sunday 11 a.m.–5 p.m. Closed Mondays (except MLK Day), Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day. CAAM is located in Exposition Park at the corner of Figueroa Street and Exposition Boulevard, west of the 110 (Harbor) Freeway. Exposition Park parking is available for \$20 (daytime) at 39th and Figueroa Streets.

The Metro Expo line Expo Park/USC station is a five-minute walk through the Exposition Park Rose Garden to the Museum.

### **About Art + Practice**

A+P is a private operating 501(c)3 foundation based in the neighborhood of Leimert Park in South Los Angeles. A+P supports the local needs of foster youth and children experiencing displacement worldwide through its collaborations with nonprofit providers First Place for Youth and Nest Global. A+P also provides Angelenos with access to museum-curated art exhibitions and diverse public programs, organized by CAAM. Admission to A+P is free.

Hours: Tuesday–Saturday 11:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. Closed Sundays, Mondays, and select national holidays. A+P is located in historic Leimert Park Village at 3401 W. 43rd Place, Los Angeles, with a space for public programs across the street at 4334 Degnan Boulevard. There is metered parking on Degnan Boulevard and W. 43rd Place. Free street parking can be found in the neighboring residential area with a two-block walk to A+P. Bus lines that stop nearby are 40, 102, 210, 705, 710, and 740. A+P is also serviced by the Metro K Rail Line. The station is Leimert Park.

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### **Images**

Ben Caldwell on the set of *I-Fresh*, 1987. Photograph. Courtesy the artist

Ben Caldwell, *Loving Lights*, 1984 (still). Video, 30 min. Courtesy the artist