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2021 IN REVIEW

THE YEAR THE ART SCENE REBOUNDED, EXPANDED, AND SURRENDERED TO N.F.T.S

As the city reopened, the art world saw legacy-changing donations for the Met and the Brooklyn Museum, and a seismic shift in Tribeca's gallery scene.

By **Andrea K. Scott** December 23, 2021

The Ortuzar gallery paid homage to what may have been the first show of Black women artists ever organized in the U.S., “The Sapphire Show.” It was certainly the first such exhibition in L.A., where it opened on the Fourth of July, 1970. It was up for less than a week, but its legacy in recent years has, deservedly, been gaining momentum. The location of the original show was Gallery 32, an experimental loft space run by one of the show’s participants, the marvellous painter (also a poet, dancer, and set designer) Suzanne Jackson. The other artists were Eileen Abdulrashid (now Eileen Nelson), Gloria Bohanon, Sue Irons (now Senga Nengudi), Yvonne Cole Meo, and, the most familiar name, Betye Saar. The surviving documentation of this landmark show’s existence is a postmarked copy of the announcement, preserved in the archives of the Smithsonian. With “You’ve Come a Long Way, Baby: the Sapphire Show,” Ortuzar wisely avoided any attempt at a fossilized reënactment, instead presenting twenty-nine sculptures, photographs, prints, and paintings spanning decades of each artist’s career.



Photograph by Timothy Doyon / Courtesy Ortuzar Projects
Installation of “The Sapphire Show.” A large blue abstract art piece hangs from two pillars.



Photograph by Timothy Doyon / Courtesy Ortuzar Projects
A different view of “The Sapphire Show.” A green-and-gold art work sits on the ground in the middle of the room.