

# Frieze

## Artists' Artists: Part One

Hurvin Anderson, Artur Barrio, Renate Bertlmann, Polly Braden, Matt Keegan and Sergio Lombardo discuss the artworks that have stuck with them

IN FRIEZE MASTERS 12 OCT 20



### **Matt Keegan nominates 'Democracy: A Project by Group Material' 1987 – 1989)**

In late September, The Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) Boston, MFA Houston, the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., and the Tate Modern in London decided to postpone a jointly organized Philip Guston retrospective '... until a time at which we think that the powerful message of social and racial justice that is at the center of Philip Guston's work can be more clearly interpreted.' Curiously, the ongoing and months-long protests for racial justice happening across the USA and elsewhere does not provide the time for such an exhibition and related programming.

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During the neoliberal turn of Ronald Reagan's presidency and the height of the AIDS crisis, the Dia Art Foundation – at the recommendation of Yvonne Rainer – provided an artist collective with a venue and an extended show run to address democracy. 'Democracy: A Project by Group Material' took place at Dia from 1987 to 1989 and translated to a companion publication in 1990; it stands as an exceptional model of open-ended exhibition-making, collective programming and distributable documentation. In the related book, Group Material writes: 'Because every social or cultural relationship is a political one, we regard an understanding of the link between politics and culture as essential.' Their multipart project addressed topics that have striking resonance with the present moment. Sections were titled 'Education and Democracy', 'Politics and Election', 'Cultural Participation', and 'AIDS and Democracy: A Case Study'.

*Matt Keegan is an artist based in Brooklyn, USA. His book 1996, co-published by New York Consolidated and Inventory Press, is released on 10 October 2020.*