

# The New York Times

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ART & DESIGN

## What to See in New York City Galleries This Week

By ROBERTA SMITH, HOLLAND COTTER, WILL HEINRICH and KAREN ROSENBERG NOV. 24, 2016



An installation view of Sondra Perry's "Resident Evil." She uses video games in her work, which illuminates the black experience. Sondra Perry and Jason Mandella/The Kitchen

### Sondra Perry

#### 'Resident Evil'

*The Kitchen*

*512 West 19th Street*

*Chelsea*

*Through Dec. 10*

"Resident Evil," the New Jersey-born artist Sondra Perry's first institutional solo show, should be required viewing. With four formally accomplished, brutally forthright video installations, Ms. Perry uses the implacable inhumanity of computer and video-game software as a searing window into the contemporary black experience.

One video makes the connection between police brutality and operating system failures explicitly, combining discussions of the so-called "blue screen of death," a type of Windows error message,

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and the “blue code of silence,” the corrupt police officer’s version of omertà, with photographs of black women and girls who have died in police custody. In another, Ms. Perry’s own face, jarringly grafted onto a ready-made avatar though it doesn’t quite fit, impersonates the kind of deeply shocked false consciousness that life inside such systems can foster.

But the crowning heartbreaker is the title piece, named after Capcom’s first-person shooter video game from 1996. Footage of the artist’s living room, of her mother reading on the couch and of Eartha Kitt singing “I Want to Be Evil” on their television skips jaggedly into footage of a protest in Baltimore after the 2015 death, in police custody, of Freddie Gray. We see both Fox News and citizen-smartphone versions of an encounter between Geraldo Rivera and the young activist Kwame Rose. While Mr. Rose makes an impassioned case for his own and his neighbors’ humanity, Mr. Rivera rolls on like an automaton, unable to deviate from his preprogrammed, sensationalist goal.