

# Njideka Akunyili Crosby: Predecessors

July 15 through October 01, 2017

Curated by Ian Berry & Steven Matijcio; Organized by the Contemporary Arts Center & The Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery at Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, New York.

ARTIST(S) Njideka Akunyili Crosby

When Njideka Akunyili (b.1983) left Lagos for the U.S. at age 16 she detoured from her initial plan to be a doctor to pursue painting and fulfill the urge to tell another side of Nigeria's story. "America has a lot of people talking about how Nigeria doesn't," she says. "Often people have a singular view about Nigeria and Africa. But problems of misrepresentation happen when people tell your story for you." To posit a pronounced, but hybridized voice she fuses painting, drawing, collage and the use of transfers – a typically Western printing process that involves transferring ink from photographs using solvent. Akunyili Crosby builds up the transfer images of popular culture to reference traditional African textiles, creating quilt-like pieces that speak to post-colonial identities and traditions being pieced together. Her first paintings navigated the domestic landscape of life with her new American husband and intimate scenes of their wedding and home. *The Predecessors* mines deeper into Akunyili Crosby's past, collecting portraits of her Nigerian family in a range of domestic settings. This exhibition will unite this seminal series for the first time, bringing together individual pieces from London, New Church, Cape Town in South Africa, New York and Los Angeles to celebrate a formative body in an artist's rapidly emerging voice.

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