

# KUNSTVEREIN IN HAMBURG

## PRESS RELEASE

### **LATOYA RUBY FRAZIER – FLINT IS FAMIL ACT III**

20.5. – 2.10.2022



*Courtesy LaToya Ruby Frazier and Gladstone Gallery*

### **Pressreview**

19.2021, 12 Uhr

Registrations: [presse@kunstverein.de](mailto:presse@kunstverein.de)

### **Opening**

19.5.2022, 18 Uhr

Speakers Koyo Kouoh, Rasha Salti, Gabriella Beckhurst Feijoo (8. Triennale der Photographie), Frauke Willems, Milan Ther and Nicholas Tammens

### **Artist Talk**

LaToya Ruby Frazier in conversation with Nicholas Tammens

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As part of the *Triennial of Photography Hamburg*, the Kunstverein in Hamburg presents *Flint is Family, Act III* by LaToya Ruby Frazier (\*1982), the final part in a series of photographs documenting the water crisis in Flint, Michigan, which started in 2014 and continues until today. Through capturing the stories of Flint residents, Frazier shows how industrial and governmental neglect toward the sanctity of the city's water supply had an immediate impact on community members' lives. In this final act, Frazier shows how Shea Cobb, Amber Hasan, and herself—three African American women from working class backgrounds—were at the helm of bringing resources and care to a community under attack.

*Flint is Family* began when Frazier travelled to Flint, Michigan in 2016, commissioned by Elle magazine to document the water crisis resultant from lead contamination from the city's infrastructure and its effects on the community. While in Flint, she met with poet, activist and mother Shea Cobb who would collaborate with her for five years, documenting the stories of Flint residents while working on initiating tangible solutions for providing clean and safe drinking water. What resulted is a series of photographs organized in three acts that follow Cobb in her fight for her family and community's health and wellbeing, imaging her family's personal negotiation with their environment, and documenting the personal costs of corporate and governmental irresponsibility.

In *Act I*, Frazier introduces Cobb, her family and her collective of artists, The Sister Tour. While on assignment, Frazier visited the Cobb family, documenting Cobb's daily life as she worked as a hairstylist and bus driver, while supporting her career as a poet, writer and singer. Motivated by her desire to protect her daughter's health, Cobb decided to move her family to Mississippi, where her father owns land. With *Act II*, Frazier shows the reverse migration of Cobb and her daughter to her father's land, which they will one day inherit. There they learn to take care of their Tennessee Walking Horses and the land's freshwater springs. However, due to the segregation and discrimination in the local county school system they soon decided to return to Flint.

*Act III* documents the arrival of a 11,793 kilogram atmospheric water generator to Flint in 2019 that Frazier, Cobb and her best friend Amber Hasan managed to set up and operate in the northern side of the city. This third act records people's reactions to the introduction of the generator, a time which, for many of the city's younger residents at least, was the first-time clean water had been made readily available in living memory. Through photographs and text, Frazier provides testimonials from residents, telling of their struggle to attain clean drinking water, the health problems caused as a result, and the further impact of this public health crisis on the social fabric of the community. Throughout this presentation, Frazier represents how the impact of industrial and governmental mismanagement on the environment has direct social effects on the communities living there.

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Expanding on the legacy of the work of Gordon Parks and Ralph Ellison, who photographed 1940s Harlem, Frazier approaches injustices of today as a continuation of this social documentary photography that is as formally astute as it is politically forceful. Frazier's work, which focuses on actively addressing issues of social injustice, labor rights, racism, and environmental pollution in cities plunged into decline by deindustrialization, veritably corresponds with the theme of the *8th Triennale of Photography: currency*.

Curated by Nicholas Tammens

Exhibition design: Lennart Wolff

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Translation: Vanessa Joan Müller

Graphic Concept: Duncan Whyte / LaToya Ruby Frazier

Graphic Design: Ziga Testen, Kim Mumm Hansen

## CV

LaToya Ruby Frazier's (\*1982 Braddock, Pennsylvania) recent solo exhibitions include True Pictures?: LaToya Ruby Frazier at Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg (2021); The Last Cruze, Renaissance Society, Chicago (2019); LaToya Ruby Frazier, at Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean, Luxembourg (2019) and Centre de Photographie, Geneva (2020); Flint is Family, Newcomb Art Museum of Tulane, New Orleans; And from the coaltips a tree will rise, MAC's Musée des Arts Contemporains, Le Grand-Hornu (2017).

She received a Master of Fine Arts at Syracuse University (2007) before studying at the Whitney Independent Study Program (2011). Since 2016 she has been teaching at The School of Art Institute, Chicago. Her work has appeared in editorials for publications such as Elle, Vanity Fair, and the New York Times Magazine. To date, she has published her projects as The Last Cruze (Renaissance Society, 2020); And from the Coaltips a Tree Will Rise (MAC's Grand Hornu, 2017); The Notion of Family (Aperture, 2016); and Flint is Family In Three Acts (Steidl / The Gordon Parks Foundation, 2022-forthcoming). Frazier has received numerous awards, including the Gordon Parks Foundation Award, a MacArthur Genius Grant, and a Guggenheim Fellowship. Frazier is represented by Gladstone Gallery, New York and Brussels.

The exhibition is kindly supported by the Ministry of Culture and Media of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg



Media Partner:



For more information:

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Press materials and exhibition images can be downloaded from our website at the following link:

<https://www.kunstverein.de/presse>

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