

Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects is pleased to announce Edgar Arceneaux's seventh solo exhibition at the gallery. The exhibition will feature the Los Angeles premiere of *Until, Until, Until...*, 'the artist's first theatrical work, which was commissioned for the 2015 Performa Biennial in New York. Both the play and the objects included in *Until, Until, Until...*' are oriented toward themes of audiences and trauma, migration and displacement, erasure and reformation. They trace a long historical arc starting before the heyday of Bert Williams Vaudeville in the 1890's and through and past Ronald Reagan's presidency in the 1980's. In addition to the installation, which includes the theatrical set, sculptures, and new drawings, performances of the critically acclaimed piece will take place at the gallery at 8pm on June 2, June 3, and June 4.

Starring the actor Frank Lawson, *Until, Until, Until...* 'is a look back at Broadway legend Ben Vereen's controversial performance at Ronald Reagan's inaugural celebration in 1981. At this event, Vereen, who had recently won a Tony Award for his performance in *Pippin*, staged a musical number in homage to the trailblazing vaudeville performer Bert Williams, who, because of racist laws dictating who could appear on stage, always performed in blackface. For his performance, Vereen also donned blackface, in order to access the vulnerability and reality of Williams' legacy. Unfortunately, the television audience never saw the second half of Vereen's performance, where the actor attended to the issue of race and blackface in Williams' own words. The truncated version of his performance that was broadcast switched from his dazzling high kicks, the delighted faces of the Reagans and the Bushes, to the next number: the rockabilly country-pop of Donnie and Marie Osmond, omitting the crucial second part of Vereen's performance. The incomplete broadcast triggered a devastating backlash amongst Vereen's audience and followers and completely derailed his career.

Arceneaux's play restages Vereen's original performance in its entirety. Blurring the historical timelines between Bert William's, Ben Vereen's and Frank Lawson's performances, the play shifts back and forth between the experiences of a contemporary audience and the audience in Reagan's inauguration. Both an homage to Vereen's performance and a powerful re-visitation of an important historical event, the play reflects on the power of the media, its ability to manipulate reality, and the devastating consequences for the public.

In addition to the sculptures that compose the set of *Until, Until, Until...* 'the exhibition includes a series of new shadowbox works. Juxtaposing watercolors of the American landscape with newspaper headlines from the Detroit riots rendered in mirror on glass, they bring together several great migrations: the expansion west from the original colonies and white flight and the resulting economic collapse of many American cities. In new drawings on large sheets of muslin, the same

material used to make theater curtains, dry erase markers record every mark and erasure as a ghost image, marking time and process. Bert Williams, Ben Vereen and Frank Lawson migrated towards the glitz and glamour of Hollywood from the American South. Arceneaux's drawings, in tracing these movements of migration, capture the tenuous and segregated realities of the American Dream, thus contextualizing Vereen's personal tragedy into a larger narrative of societal rifts.

Edgar Arceneaux (b. 1972 in Los Angeles) lives and works in Los Angeles. He was the director of the Watts House Project from 1999-2012. Solo exhibitions of his work have been mounted at the MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge; Kunstverein Ulm, Germany; Kunstmuseum Basel; the Studio Museum Harlem, New York, and the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles. He has been included in the Whitney Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York and in group exhibitions at Mona Bismarck American Center, Paris; Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; the Orange County Museum of Art; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; and the Museum Ludwig, Cologne, amongst others. Upcoming exhibitions are at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco; The Baltic Center, England; The Pompidou, Paris. Edgar Arceneaux is also represented by Nathalie Obadia, Paris, France.

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