

"Through photographs, videos and text I use my artwork as a platform to advocate for others, the oppressed, the disenfranchised. When I encounter an individual or family facing inequality I create visibility through images and story-telling to expose the violation of their human rights." - LaToya Ruby Frazier

On January 14, Gavin Brown's enterprise will open its debut solo exhibition by the artist and photographer, LaToya Ruby Frazier, her largest exhibition in New York to date. A recipient of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Fellowship in 2015, LaToya Ruby Frazier's artistic practice spans a range of media that incorporates photography, video and performance and centers on the nexus of social justice, cultural change and commentary on the American experience. This exhibition features three distinct recent bodies of work: *Flint is Family*, *The Notion of Family*, and *A Pilgrimage to Noah Purifoy's Desert Art Museum* whose themes address Frazier's deeply rooted and long held concerns exploring the legacies of racism, inequality, economic decline, access to healthcare and environmental justice.

*Flint is Family* (2016-2017), is a series of works exploring Flint, Michigan's water crisis and the effects on its residents. Frazier spent five months with three generations of women, the poet and singer, Shea Cobb, Shea's mother, Renée Cobb, and her daughter, Zion, living in Flint in 2016 witnessing their day to day lives as they lived through one of the most devastating man-made ecological crises in US history. Citing Gordon Parks' and Ralph Ellison's 1948 collaboration *Harlem Is Nowhere* as an influence, Frazier utilized mass media as an outlet to reach a broad audience, publishing her images of Flint in conjunction with a special feature on the water disaster in *Elle* magazine in September 2016. Like Parks, Frazier uses the camera as a weapon and agent of social change.

Frazier's best-known body of work, *The Notion of Family* (2001-2014), is an exploration into her family, her hometown, and her own experiences through landscape and portraiture in the deindustrialized steel town of Braddock, PA. This long-running series was Frazier's first engagement with themes that would define her career to date: systemic racism, displacement, historical narrative, and the aftermath of economic erosion in communities. It too focuses on three generations of women—Frazier's grandmother, born in 1925 and alive to see her hometown of Braddock, PA thrive under the prosperous steel boom; her mother who lived in Braddock through the deindustrialization and segregation of the 1960s; and LaToya herself—who grew up during the 1980s “war on drugs” and witnessed the abandonment of her hometown.

*A Pilgrimage To Noah Purifoy's Desert Art Museum* (2016-2017) was inspired by Frazier's journey

with fellow artist Abigail DeVille to Noah Purifoy's outdoor museum in the high desert of Joshua Tree. A pioneering force of California Assemblage, Noah Purifoy's practice drew from the varied traditions of Dada, Surrealism and African-American yard work. Born in 1917, Purifoy fled his native Alabama for Los Angeles upon returning from WWII. In Frazier's words, "It struck me deeply, his sense of displacement. After the Watts riots of the mid-1960s, he collected burned materials that ended up in his art. Purifoy had a creative solution to dealing with injustice. Instead of evaporating or being silent, he took these things—pieces of wreckage—and turned them into works of art, a meditation on one's life, one's work, one's history. This is the most powerful act."

LaToya Ruby Frazier has been the subject of numerous solo presentations of her work and recent exhibitions have included The Brooklyn Museum of Art; The Seattle Art Museum, The Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston; Contemporary Art Museum, Houston; Musée des Arts Contemporains, Grand-Hornu, Belgium; CAPC Musée d'Art Contemporain de Bordeaux, France; Carré d'Art - musée d'art contemporain de Nîmes, France; The Silver Eye Center for Photography, Pittsburgh; and The August Wilson Center, Pittsburgh. Her work is included in celebrated international collections, including the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Studio Museum in Harlem, the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York, The Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto, The Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., and Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, among others.

#### RELATED PROGRAMS:

Panel discussions, art-making workshops and performances at GBE in January and February in conjunction with the exhibition, *LaToya Ruby Frazier*. All programs take place at 439 W 127th Street and are free and open to the public.

#### Art-Making: 'Zine Project

January, 20, 3pm

February 10, 3pm

February 17, 3pm

Inspired by LaToya Ruby Frazier's concern for preserving the stories and lives of people whom are forgotten or systematically silenced, learn how 'zines can be an accessible grassroots tool to shed light on social and political injustices as well a vehicle for personal storytelling. At these workshops, you will work with artists who specialize in 'zine-making and self-publishing to create a 'zine that captures your story and relationship to your social landscape. These 'zines can incorporate photography, text and narrative to amplify your history, memory or concerns about the world around you. Youth, adults and seniors or those with no previous experience are welcome to join as well as seasoned 'zine- makers who would like to print and assemble projects on site. Materials will be provided but you are also welcome to bring your own pre-existing materials to create your 'zine. These workshops are completely free of charge, however, space is limited so show up early to reserve a spot.

In Conversation: LaToya Ruby Frazier, Dr. Esa Davis, Rev. Kyndra Frazier and Gabriel N. Mendes, Ph.D.

Saturday, January 27, 3pm

LaToya Ruby Frazier joins Dr. Esa Davis, Associate Professor of Medicine, Clinical and Translational Science at The University of Pittsburgh and a board-certified practicing family physician with a focus in women's health who has investigated the perinatal, cultural and behavioral factors associated with racial and socioeconomic disparities in obesity among women; Rev. Kyndra Frazier, lead innovator of Harlem's HOPE Center and Associate Pastor of Pastoral Care and Counseling at First Corinthian Baptist Church in Harlem; and Gabriel N. Mendes, Ph.D., author of *Under the Strain of Color: Harlem's Lafargue Clinic and the Promise of an Antiracist Psychiatry* (Cornell University Press, 2015), and Associate Director of Public Health Programs at the Bard Prison Initiative, for a special conversation on health care and access from Braddock to Harlem.

In Conversation: LaToya Ruby Frazier, Abigail DeVille, Alex Kitnick, and Yael Lipschutz

Saturday, February 3, 3pm

Bronx-based multidisciplinary artist Abigail DeVille's work touches upon displacement, migration,

marginalization, and cultural invisibility. Alex Kitnick is Brant Foundation Fellow in Contemporary Arts at Bard College. He wrote about Noah Purifoy's work in *May 8* (Winter 2012). Yael Lipschutz is an independent curator whose recent exhibitions include “*Cameron: Songs for the Witchwoman*” at the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art and “*Noah Purifoy: Junk Dada*” at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. She serves as a Trustee of the Noah Purifoy Foundation. Together they join LaToya Ruby Frazier for a discussion about artistic practice, creation and displacement, and the legacy of Noah Purifoy.

In Conversation: LaToya Ruby Frazier, Shea Cobb, Amber Hasan, and Fred Moten

Saturday, February 24, 3pm

From Flint, Michigan, artists, activists and founders of *The Sister Tour*, Amber Hasan and Shea Cobb use their personal lives and encounters with the water crisis to serve as a catalyst to help, serve and support teens and women to harness their creative strength in the midst of chaos from Flint, Michigan to Puerto Rico. Fred Moten is Professor in the Department of Performance Studies, Tisch School of the Arts at NYU. Moten teaches courses and conducts research in black studies, performance studies, poetics and critical theory. He is author of many titles, most recently a three-volume collection of essays whose general title is *consent not to be a single being* (Duke University Press, 2017, 2018). They join LaToya Ruby Frazier in conversation.

Performance: *The Sister Tour*

Featuring: Amber Hasan, Shea Cobb, Mandi Roza, Macana Roxie, Brinae Ali, Big Juicy, Yohanes Worthom, DiAndre Brown

Saturday, February 24, 5pm

*The Sister Tour* offers female artists a creative, safe and supportive environment to grow as independent artists. The Sister Tour provides the stage and platform for performance along the way building a collective of female singers, rappers, poets, musicians and comedians. Ultimately, it empowers women to build in their communities and start their own creative businesses. Following

the discussion, please join Shea Cobb and Amber Hasan, as they bring *The Sister Tour to Harlem* for a special performance. \*

\* Suggested donation to support fundraising for *The Sister Tour*

*(This document was automatically generated by Contemporary Art Library.)*