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Disparates

Press Release

Online Exhibition

Lorna Simpson Give Me Some Moments



hauserwirth.com

Live Date: 2 May 2020

In the upcoming online exhibition opening 2 May, Hauser & Wirth will debut new collages by American artist Lorna Simpson. 'Give Me Some Moments' finds Simpson building upon themes that are essential to her practice: the nature of representation, identity, gender, race, and history, which are all central to contemporary culture and American life today.

For more than 30 years, Simpson's powerful works have entangled viewers in an equivocal web of meaning, drawing upon techniques of collage through the use of found images, often culled from the pages of Jet and Ebony magazines from the 1950s to the 1970s. These publications focused on subjects of lifestyle, culture, and politics from an African-American perspective and are credited with chronicling black lives and issues so sorely under-represented elsewhere in the media. Through this exhibition, Simpson continues to develop the language of the found image as a source for her work, deftly navigating the territory between figuration and abstraction, past and present to open up the history of representation in images.

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– Lorna Simpson



The new collages feature a series of female and male protagonists, often the focal point of the compositions, who Simpson splices with architectural features, animals, and natural elements to create scenarios that are at once poetic and arresting. In these collages, Simpson uses the devices of extreme cropping and close-ups to hone in on sections of the bodies portrayed. As she explains, ‘the notion of fragmentation, especially of the body, is prevalent in our culture, and it’s reflected in my works. We’re fragmented not only in terms of how society regulates our bodies but in the way we think about ourselves.’ In ‘Flames’ (2019), Simpson forefronts women’s heads and inserts scenes of burning buildings in place of advertised coiffed wigs, while in ‘California’ (2019) she intertwines geological source material from a 1931 textbook with domestic scenery, encouraging new narratives to emerge from the unexpected settings.

While under quarantine, Simpson has continued to engage the analog nature of the collage process, directly cutting and pasting from *Ebony* magazines, resulting in three new surreal portraits that are featured in this exhibition: ‘Solar Glare’ (2020), ‘Walk with Me’ (2020), and ‘Lyra night sky styled in NYC’ (2020).

Since the beginning of her practice Simpson has used her work to suggest or point to a narrative while simultaneously imbuing a distinct sense of ambiguity. The collage works use fragmented figures to continue these notions as well as exemplify a surreal side of Simpson’s practice through multifaceted layers of both abstraction and figuration.

‘Give Me Some Moments’ follows the artist’s critically acclaimed 2019 exhibition ‘Darkening’ at Hauser & Wirth’s 22nd Street gallery in New York. In 2019, Simpson was awarded the esteemed J. Paul Getty Medal, honoring her extraordinary contribution to practice, understanding, and support of the arts.

About the artist

Born in Brooklyn, Lorna Simpson came to prominence in the 1980s with her pioneering approach to conceptual photography. Simpson’s early work – particularly her striking juxtapositions of text and staged images – raised

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questions about the nature of representation, identity, gender, race and history that continue to drive the artist's expanding and multi-disciplinary practice today. She deftly explores the medium's umbilical relation to memory and history, both central themes within her work.

Studying on the West Coast in the mid-1980s, Simpson was part of a generation of artists who utilized conceptual approaches to undermine the credibility and apparent neutrality of language and images. Her most iconic works from this period depict African-American figures as seen only from behind or in fragments. Photographed in a neutral studio space, the figures are tied neither to a specific place nor time. Drawing upon a long-standing interest in poetry and literature, the artist accompanies these images with her own fragmented text, which is at times infused with the suggestion of violence or trauma. The incredibly powerful works entangle viewers into an equivocal web of meaning, with what is unseen and left unsaid as important as that which the artist does disclose. Seemingly straightforward, these works are in fact near-enigmas, as complex as the subject matter they take on.

Over the past 30 years, Simpson has continued to probe these questions while expanding her practice to encompass various media including film and video, painting, drawing and sculpture. Her recent works incorporate appropriated imagery from vintage Jet and Ebony magazines, found photo booth images, and discarded Associated Press photos of natural elements – particularly ice, a motif that appears in her sculptural work in the form of glistening 'ice' blocks made of glass. The new work continues to immerse viewers in layers of bewitching paradoxes, threading dichotomies of figuration and abstraction, past and present, destruction and creation, and male and female. Layered and multivalent, Simpson's practice deploys metaphor, metonymy, and formal prowess to offer a potent response to American life today.

Supporting COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund for the World Health Organization

Under the umbrella of Hauser & Wirth's new global philanthropic and charitable initiative #artforbetter, we are donating 10% of gross profits from sales of all works in our online exhibitions to the COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund for the World Health Organization.

To learn more about the COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund for WHO please visit:
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Construction
2020
Collage on paper
56.4 x 43.3 cm /
22 3/16 x 17 1/16 in

California
2019
Found photograph and
collage on paper
56.5 x 41.8 cm /
22 1/4 x 16 7/16 in

Solar
2019
Collage on paper; 3 framed
collages
40 x 34.4 cm /
15 3/4 x 13 1/2 in
Installation dimensions
variable