Radial Survey

Inheritance

——Vol.2

Silver Eye Center for Photography

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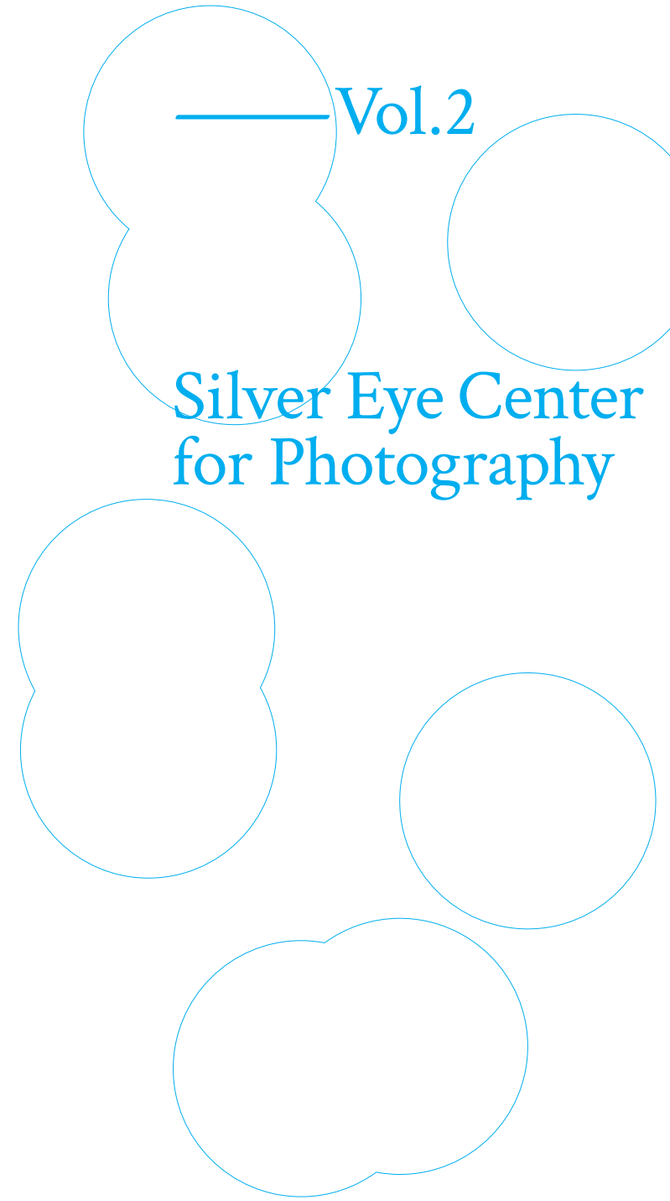

In 2019 we launched this epic project as a celebration of photography and art for a region that has often been ignored. We were proud to have shone a spotlight on so many artists who deeply deserved the recognition and support, and were thrilled with the engaged, positive, thoughtful responses from our community. We couldn't wait to begin working on the next edition of this biennial, and we also could not have imagined what the next two years had in store.¶ We are and always will be devastated by the incalculable toll of the pandemic and the long history of racial injustice and systemic violence that we as a society have only begun to reckon with. We also believe, now more than ever, that in this moment of devastation art is not a luxury or a diversion, but something we need. We need art's ability to speak our great and small truths, to express our profound sorrows and our joys, to document our complex histories, and to imagine our futures. Most of all we need art to bring us together

to experience all of these things and to heal. ¶ The eight incredible artists in Radial Survey Vol. II use their artwork to do all of these things, and in ways direct and indirect respond to this unprecedented moment. I am profoundly grateful to all of the artists in this show for sharing their work with us, and for welcoming the *Radial Survey* team into their studios and practices over the past year of planning, dreaming, revising and deadlines. For me, these eight voices have been a constant bright spot in a time when the world has been so dark. ¶ I would also like to thank the Silver Eye team for the tireless and thoughtful work in making this important show and catalog possible: Kate Kelley, Sean Stewart, Justin Audet, Elana Schlenker and Corinne Ang, Leo Hsu, Jillian Daniels, our student Scholars @ Silver Eye Camryn Drabenstadt and Jacob Sizemore, this project's curatorial advisors, our contributing writers Liz Park and Anita Bateman, and our art handler and installer Brian McNearney.

¶ *Radial Survey* would not be possible without the generous support of our Opening Party Co-Chairs Laura Heberton-Shlomchik and Lexi Bishop, our Host Committee, and our patrons and sponsors. Silver Eye is also grateful for the support of the Allegheny Regional Asset District, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Bloomberg Philanthropies, The Fine Foundation, The Heinz Endowments, The Hillman Foundation, the Henry John Simonds Foundation, the Irving and Aaronel deRoy Gruber Charitable Foundation, Joy of Giving Something Inc, the PNC Charitable Trust, and the William Talbott Hillman Foundation. ¶ Finally I am incredibly thankful for critical funding for this exhibition that was provided by The National Endowment for the Arts.
¶ I hope this show connects with you, and allows you to connect with this region at this moment in time.

What is the *Radial Survey*?

A conversation with David Oresick & Leo Hsu

Leo Hsu: What is the *Radial Survey*?

David Oresick: The *Radial Survey* is our take on the big museum biennial exhibition. We wanted to make a survey of contemporary photography but have it be regionally focused. The question was, well what region are we focusing on? Because we're not in any really obvious region—we're kind of part of Appalachia, we're part of the Mid-Atlantic region, we're part of the Rust Belt—and we had a lot of discussions about what region made sense for us. We came to this idea of a 300-mile Radius around Pittsburgh, a big circle with Pittsburgh at its center. What's the biggest circle we can draw without including New York City? That was a bit cheeky, but in a lot of ways the impetus for this survey was the idea that we are operating outside of the major art capitals of North America. We are almost exactly at the halfway point between these two major cities, New York and Chicago, and the artists working in these cities have separate concerns that they're working with.

The first *Radial Survey* in 2019 was essentially an experiment where we asked simply: who was making work in this region that needed to be seen? This second edition, in 2021, is an extension of that experiment, where we made tweaks, mostly to find ways to involve the Radius community. But there have been so many world changing events and circumstances in the past two years that we changed and extended the question. This time we are asking with more intention: who is making work in this region that speaks to this moment?

LH: What are some of the concerns that might distinguish an artist in one of the major art centers from artists working inside the Radius?

DO: There are practical concerns which are about sustaining oneself as an artist, about career opportunities, and about access to things like galleries and museums. There's just not as high of a concentration of these kinds of cultural forces within the Radius, right? So, practically, artists in the Radius are working more independently, or with smaller support structures.

And then, the other part of that, which is drawn out really well in these two versions of *Radial Survey*, is asking: what are the actual concerns of the artists? We've found a lot of people are engaging with histories and stories and mythologies and ideas that are very specific to these places. And these are places like West Virginia, Pittsburgh itself, or rural western New York, places that aren't really represented in national culture. They're overlooked because so much of the concentration of the art world is in giant cities, so a lot of those concerns tend to be these super urban concerns. Someone like Ryan Arthurs in the *Radial Survey* is thinking about what it means to create a queer utopia in the exurbs of Buffalo, New York, or Jay Simple who is interrogating and researching the specific histories and injustices that took place where he was teaching in Virginia. Anique Jordan is using her hometown's newspaper as a way of documenting and meditating on the violence and trauma she's seeing in her community. These are the sorts of questions that can be asked in the Radius and in a way asked of the Radius.

LH: And what have you discovered in this second iteration of *Radial Survey*, as you've put these artists alongside each other?

DO: This idea about place and history became really, really pertinent. A lot of artists are asking this question, how have I come to the place where I am? Artists are asking questions about their family lineage or about the histories of the places they find themselves in, like Raymond Thompson Jr. investigating the history of Black mine workers and Black men who were digging tunnels in West Virginia. What has happened here and how did we get here? I don't know that we were specifically thinking "we have to respond to 2020" but it just became impossible not to because everyone we were talking to was dealing with a pandemic, dealing with a new social justice movement that I think is changing the world, and thinking through all that stuff in their artwork. And one of the big questions about this moment in time, again and again, that just kept coming up for these artists was: what are the circumstances that led to this? And not within the past year, but for generations before this moment, what are these forces and circumstances that brought us here?

LH: It seems like this is an instrument that can give the kind of focus necessary in order to dig deeper to ask those questions. In the context of this newly powerful social justice movement it feels like making these stories visible alongside each other becomes really important.

DO: Working on this show I've learned of the power of telling one's own story in a way that goes against a lot of what I was taught when I was in art school. I'm thinking about projects like Nakeya's or Nadiya's or Hannah's, which are really thinking about their own families, histories about the things their mothers and fathers went through, about a lot of generational trauma, but also a lot of intergenerational joy and love. I felt like when I was in art school, if I wanted to tell a story about my family and where I came from, that would have been laughed out of the room. There was no space for a kind of personal storytelling. You told the world's story, you told "important" stories but the

photographer's story wasn't important, the artist's story wasn't so important. And it has become so irrefutably clear within the context of 2020 and these social justice movements that our stories have value, and purpose, and meaning and are worth telling, and worth listening to. Understanding this became a framing device for Kate and me, and everyone who's helping to organize this, that this was really a moment for us to listen.

Another thing that stands out is just the sheer amount of archival, family album photographs that have made it onto the walls of this show. We just kept meeting with artists and they're like, actually I think it's really important that this photo of my mother, grandmother, sister, child becomes included in this because my artwork and my life and my biography and my history, I can't unravel them right now.

LH: Through photography's recent and not so recent history there is an increased desire for the artist to make their position clear and not to create a body of work in which they are not themselves somehow legible or apparent.

DO: I keep having this reaction to a lot of studio visits which is, I need to see the artist in this work right now, you know? And of course there's, caveat, lots of practices, lots of ways to do this, but what's on my mind right now in this context are that people—and I love that word legible—that people are insisting on making themselves, and their opinions, and their histories, and their feelings, their confusion, their ambivalence, their anger…it's that pronoun, right? "Their." It's theirs and it's legible.

One of the artists that has been a pure pleasure to work with on this show was a person I went to high school with, and I've known for years, Njaimeh Njie. Njaimeh is tracing several generations back of her family, from Pittsburgh and the Great Migration. What are all these factors that led to Njaimeh being here today, making this work, asking these questions? I think that became one of the unifying themes as she started to pull her work together, that question of, how did we come to where we are? Which I believe is the title of Njaimeh's book, actually, come to think of it!

One of the things that I kept asking her was, can we hear more of your voice? You're telling me what happened, but can you tell me how it made you feel as well? And I really love the direction the project has gone. Sometimes she rightly told me, no, that I didn't get to know that, but a lot of times more of her feelings, even her own questions, were brought into the work in a way where her agency within the project became undeniable and that was really powerful for me. I've loved watching a lot of these artists grow as they grapple with adding their voice in a more full-throated way into this work.

LH: What's the process through which the artists are selected?

DO: This time around we used a network of curatorial advisors. These are people from all over the Radius, curators, artists, and teachers. Before we met with any artists, we met with all of these curatorial advisors, people from a broad swath of the Radius, so everyone representing a different town, city, or rural place. We asked them, who are the artists in your backyard that we should know about. And that was pretty much the extent of it. We didn't say early career, mid-career, we didn't say really anything else. We just said, you know, who should we be paying attention to from your neck of the woods? And that yielded a long, long list of names of artists. Some we had some familiarity with, many we had pretty much no familiarity with at all, and from there, we just started asking people for studio visits.

It was such a fruitful exercise for us because we found eight fantastic artists who fit the show we were creating. But, we also met many, many more artists. As a curator it can be hard sometimes to broaden your perspective in the day to day. This was a process that really forced us to look at a lot of artists who wouldn't have come across our Zoom screens through whatever normal channels we're usually looking at. It was also a way for us to connect with our colleagues in what was a pretty difficult year.

LH: It seems like it might be easier to do studio visits over Zoom in some respects. Do you think that you visited with more people than you otherwise might have?

DO: So many more people. We're no stranger to video studio visits—we're a small gallery, we're a staff of three, so a lot of our studio visits have always been Zoom visits because we don't have much of a travel budget. We can't get to the artist studios in person as much as we would like. What changed was that a lot more artists were a lot more comfortable with digital studio visits, and we could just say, hey, do you have an hour to tell me about what you're working on, and begin making those connections and seeing that work, and that really was the big, big bright spot for me, in what was a pretty dark year in so many other ways. Just how many artists we got to connect with, and how many colleagues we got to connect with, and I think that reinforces the spirit of the whole show, which is to tie this Radius together, to make these connections between colleagues, between artists, between photography lovers, and just to create reasons to be talking to each other across cities and, you know…

LH: Make a table.

DO: Yeah, we made a table and we are making seats at that table for everyone. I'm really excited how *Radial Survey*'s been able to create a new conversation.

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Leo Hsu was on the curatorial team of the first Radial Survey and is a Silver Eye board member. The conversation took place at Silver Eye on 16 August 2021.


Pittsburgh

From Our Foremothers

Liz Park

What does it mean to claim one's rightful inheritance? For Hannah Altman, Nakeya Brown and Nadiya I. Nacorda—three artists in *Radial Survey Vol. II* at Silver Eye Center for Photography—inheritance involves far more than a set of possessions or genetic characteristics that are passed down from one generation to the next. For these artists, inheritance is an acknowledgment of matrilineage—the pain and joy of their foremothers as well as customs that they practiced to assuage their troubled past and anticipate a better future. Photography, in the context of their artistic practice, becomes a tool of remembrance and a portal to another time and place where connections to generations past are actively forged.

For Hannah Altman, Jewish thought and diaspora frame her understanding of time and memory. "Home is in time," she told me during a virtual studio visit, as she discussed her recent series titled *A Permanent Home in the Mouth of the Sun* (2020–2021). The figures depicted in this work inhabit a slowed, ritualized time in which they surrender themselves to receive light with their bodies. In one of the photographs titled *Shin (Body as Mezuzah)* (2021), a person tilts their head back with eyes closed. They are unrobed and reveal the Hebrew letter shin ש painted on the chest where their collar bones narrow. A dramatic chiaroscuro accentuates the skin as a writing surface. As suggested by the parenthetical title, the figure's flesh becomes a mezuzah, a small piece of parchment contained in a case decorated with the letter shin. Affixed to the doorpost, a mezuzah marks the entry to a Jewish home and provides symbolic guardianship and protection. To mark a body with this letter equates home with the inner psyche of an individual; the body thus protected is a sanctuary for the mind and the spirit. At the same time, I cannot help but think of a more troubling history of writing on bodies. The forced tattooing of concentration camp inmates during the Holocaust is the flip side of this image of blessing and reverence. The photograph conjures both historical, inherited trauma and the sanctity of one's own body as the foundation of a true home for a diasporic people.

Pressed into Flesh (2018) is a photograph from an earlier series *Kavana* (2017–2020) that similarly contains a rich duality and a biblical reference. A manicured hand holds up an apple to a beam of light, which brings out the impression of the Magen David, or the Star of David, on the skin of the fruit. In describing this work, Altman suggests how this symbol of "both oppression and pride, depending on the historical context and depending on who is looking… becomes distinctly linked to humanity, decay, sweetness, and skin." The fruit is an indelible sign of knowledge, forbidden to man yet savored by woman. The image also foregrounds a woman's role as a bearer of knowledge, memories and traditions. For Altman matrilineage remains a grounding force beyond Judaic tradition. Her mother appears in many of her photographs as a model and collaborator, in particular, in the series *Indoor Voices* (2015–ongoing). I asked Altman how she contends with the inheritance that she does not want to claim. She replied that with the inheritance of trauma comes the inheritance of ritual practice, and pointed to her photographs in the series *Kavana*, a word meaning intention, as part of a larger practice of remembering and honoring her foremothers.

If remembrance for Altman is rooted in the body that performs inherited rituals, for Nakeya Brown objects open up a portal to an otherwise foreclosed time and place. A collector of things, especially vintage hair and beauty products for Black women, Brown composes still life photographs with a distinct color palette that immediately signals mid-twentieth century. Brown creates seductive images with luscious textures and colors, but also injects an element of frustration for the desiring viewer. In the series *Facade Objects* (2015), the contents of hair products consistently obscure the faces of models on the packaging. In *If Nostalgia Were Colored Brown* (2014–2019), album covers featuring celebrity musicians such as Jean Carn, Natalie Cole and Stephanie Mills in their glamorous hairdos are paired with home hair products that peddle aspiration more than they deliver their desired effect. Absent in these and other works by Brown are the actual users of these consumer goods, even as the straighteners and rollers reinforce white notions of beauty and self-care. This is an important and deliberate omission for the artist who understands these objects as constituting an archive from which we can read myriad, more nuanced stories of communities of Black women with shared aesthetics, grooming practices and forms of self-expression.

Self Portrait in Shower Cap (2015) is one of a few instances in which we see a figure depicted in Brown's work. Wearing a pink sweater and a floral cap, Brown looks away from the camera. As part of a larger series titled *Gestures of My Bio-Myth* (2015–2019), this self-portrait denies the viewer the satisfaction of examining the creator of the image. In the safe space of anonymity, the artist creates a biomythography—a term coined by the writer Audre Lorde to indicate a rich mix of biography, myth and history. The biomyth that Brown creates through her photographs folds in stories of women who came before her. For instance, *Two Feet One Shoe* (2019), which depicts a pair of nested

champagne-colored satin shoes, is an homage to her grandmother who repeated the titular phrase to transmit her wisdom about making a commitment. Another photograph, *Softee Red* (2019), features a table arrangement of a jar of Softee hair product, rollers, a comb and an artificial rose in a bottle. Artificial flowers appear frequently in Brown's work, not merely as a decorative addition, but as a reminder that historically, and even today, working women—especially women of color—are much more likely to perform intensive, detail-oriented work with their hands.

The life of a working woman is something with which Brown is intimately familiar through her childhood interactions with her late grandmother, an immigrant from Jamaica who worked in a factory that produced car engine parts. In an installation titled *Some Assembly Required*, Brown enlarged a snapshot of her grandmother at work to present alongside a series of carefully composed still lifes that seem to catalogue the contents of her apartment: rugs and towels, a pot, a can of tropical fruit ackee, Depression-era glass bowl, a cobalt-blue vanity box, and so on. Infused with memories, these mass-produced objects suggest that, in the precious few hours that her grandmother had to herself, she nonetheless assembled a domestic life that was unique as a place of respite, comfort and beauty. These humble objects become talismanic, exerting a powerful presence that links Brown to her grandmother and, by extension, her female ancestors.

Nadiya I. Nacorda's work similarly draws on familial relations to create a constellation of images that at first glance may appear unconnected. In a body of work titled *All the Orchids Are Fine* (2018–ongoing), Nacorda presents photographs that alternate between family snapshots and carefully composed portraiture. The snapshots seemingly represent maternal relations—a woman holding a newborn over her shoulder, a girl joyfully wiggling in a woman's arms, a toddler and her adult companion on an outing, and a heavily pregnant woman. Time feels jumbled—is a child in one photograph an adult in another?—and relations unclear.

As Nacorda later explained to me, these images are taken from her family photo albums from both maternal and paternal sides. Titles offer additional clues for deciphering the relations. A black and white print, *Nana and Auntie Nakazi* (2018), depicts her maternal grandmother, who came to the US in 1964 as a political refugee from South Africa, holding her daughter, Nacorda's aunt. *Lola and Ninang in 1968* (2020) shows her paternal grandmother in the Philippines with her daughter, prior to the family's departure from the country in 1978 to seek new lives as Americans. The pregnant woman in *Nadiya, Sasha and Nico: Twenty something weeks* (2020) is the artist herself, while she was expecting her twins. Intergenerational and interracial, the relations portrayed in the family photos are intentionally ambiguous and are further pulled apart or brought together—depending on how you look at it—by Nacorda's own set of images.

In this body of work, Nacorda deploys her family members as models. A more recent portrait of her late maternal grandmother titled *They dreamt of us / A long time coming* (2020) watches over Nacorda's arrangement of images from the left. Smileless Nacorda and her cousin Sophia intimately lean into one another while sitting on a couch in *Gaya Gaya Puto Maya (Copycat)* (2018). Unlike the snapshots from her family albums, Nacorda's images elicit a range of emotions that are more difficult to identify. Is her grandmother serene or indifferent? Is her younger sister depicted with hands over her face in *Untitled #1* (2019) in despair or frustration? The striking central image titled *I saw her swallow all her feelings inside her until they ate her whole* (2018) shows Nacorda's bared teeth while the rest of her face is concealed behind a dark green leaf. Is that a scowl or a grin? Through this enigmatic set of images, Nacorda seems to ask, "what do you make of this motley group of people who call themselves a family? What binds any of us in a social contract?" The poetic title of this body of work perhaps offers an answer. "All the orchids are fine," reads an inscription on a polaroid that her late paternal grandfather kept. In the softly focused image, a couple of Asian girls look at the camera with easy smiles in a room filled with luscious plants. Nacorda is not sure who these girls are. Paired with a message of assurance, however, the image exudes the tenderness, care and love that binds any individual to another.

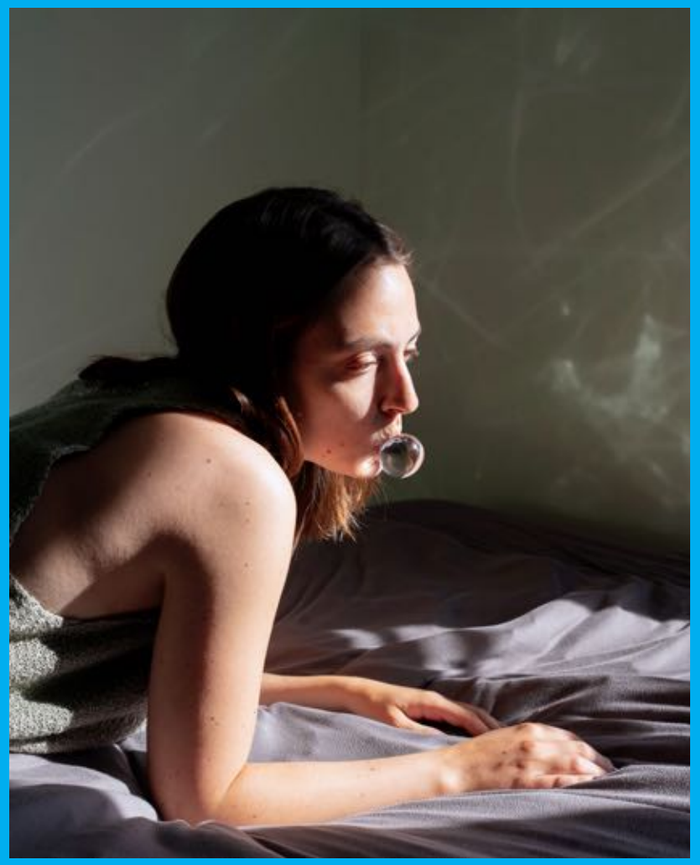
By blood or not, families and foremothers tie us to a people, culture and history. Inheritance may be given to us, but what we do with it is never a given. It is our responsibility to claim or reject our inheritance and our place within a culture and history as these three artists have done through imaging and imagining anew their relations to the women who came before them.

Hannah Altman

Kavana
(2017-2020)

A Permanent Home in the Mouth of the Sun
(2020-2021)

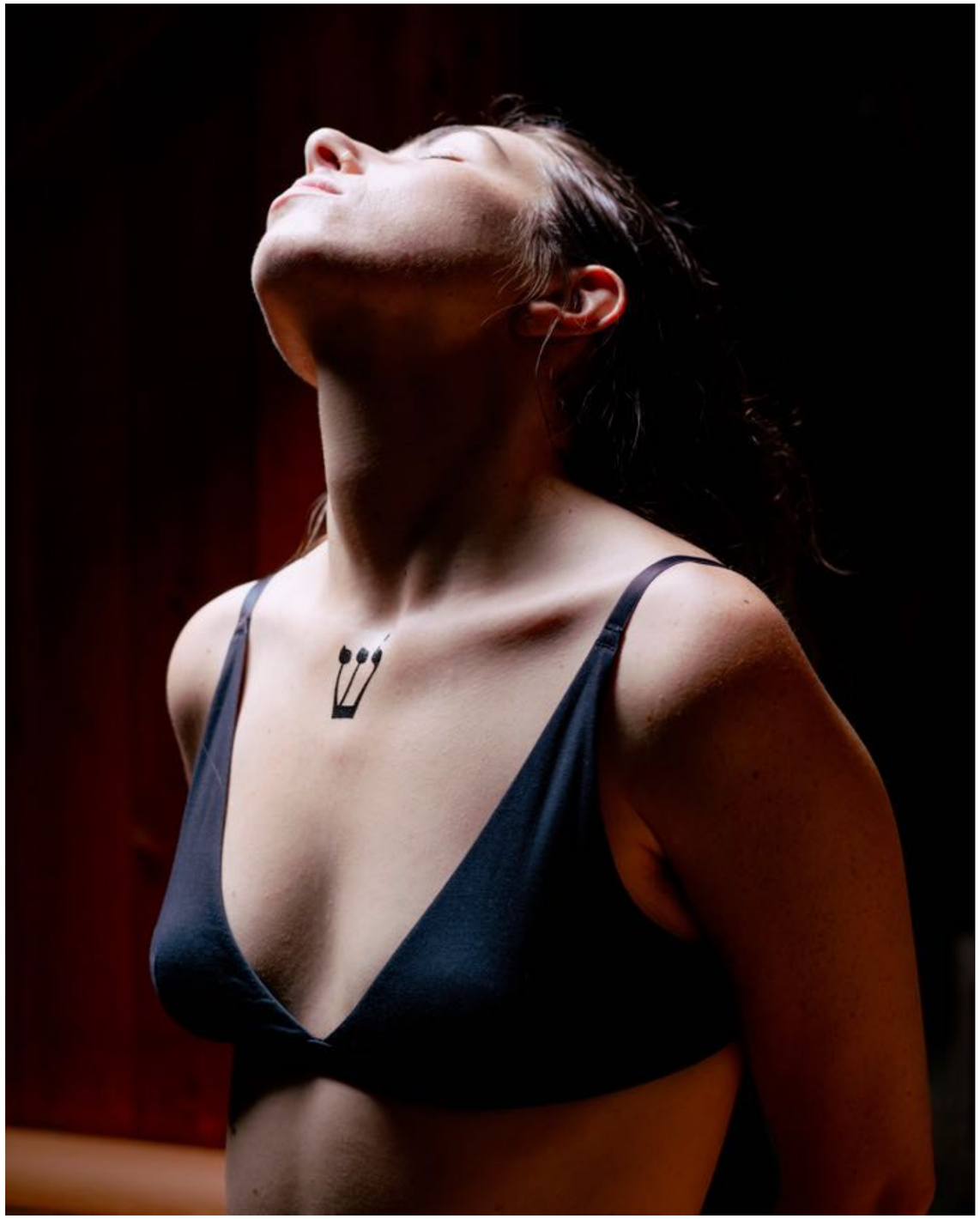
b. 1995
Richmond, VA



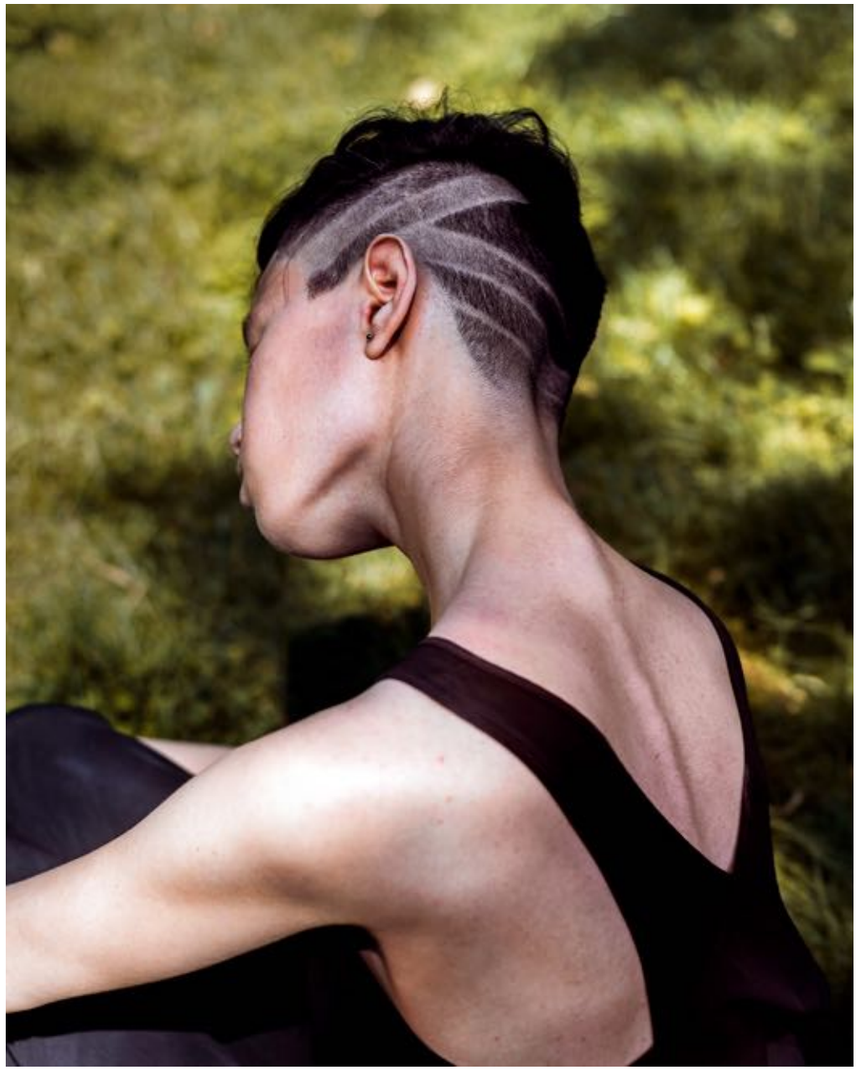
"Ethnic, cultural and religious Judaism has outlived countless temporary homes in the world over thousands of years. Jewish people have endured a most certain cycle of assimilation, advancement, persecution, eradication, repeat. The landscape shifts around time-based rituals that prevail and perpetuate a sense of collective Jewish identity. I make work informed by impermanent terrain, photographing Jewish action within this ephemeral landscape so that rituals and the stories they tell become rooted in an image. They are home in the breath between a song and a shutter closing down. They are home, finally, not in place, but in time."

Blowing A Glass Bubble to Make Permanent Something Temporary, 2021

Hannah Altman foregrounds her Jewish-American identity in these photographs through her use of objects, ritual and memory. Her portraits and still lives contain specific gestures and histories that relate to her faith: candles for Shaabat, a mezuzah, water and vessels for cleansing rituals; Altman visualizes collective memory. These photographs aspire to a sense of shared empathy and spirituality, bridging across the past, present and future, while also celebrating individual presence and reflection.



Shin (Body as Mezuzah), 2021



From left: *Priestly Blessing*, 2021; *Pressed Into Flesh*, 2018

Reflecting Light, 2021

Nakeya Brown

Some Assembly Required
(2021)

b. 1988
Baltimore, MD

"My personal identity is rooted in my family's Jamaican lineage and the complexities of working womanhood. As a working mother, I've explored the industries of labor occupied by my maternal grandmother, Vernice, to process my own challenges with parenthood. Photography has helped me to activate her name and legacy, which has a place inside me. Though not here in the physical realm, she's shown me a woman's place is wherever she puts her feet and one's sense of place has no borders."

Folded Rag Rugs & Towel, 2016

Nakeya Brown's photographs trace the histories of expressions of beauty within Black womanhood. Her series, *Mass Production Comes Home*, delves into her own personal history and heritage, focusing around her grandmother's history of labor. A patchwork-like grid of images display snapshots of Brown's grandmother at work in an automotive manufacturing plant, along with carefully composed still lives of objects such as towels, or a blue vanity box set against mid century floral wallpaper. The interplay of images speaks to dueling natures of work: labor within the site of the factory, and items associated with self care, or domestic labor. Quilting these overlapping notions of labor together, Brown creates a kind of visual heirloom, linking her to the ancestors who came before her.

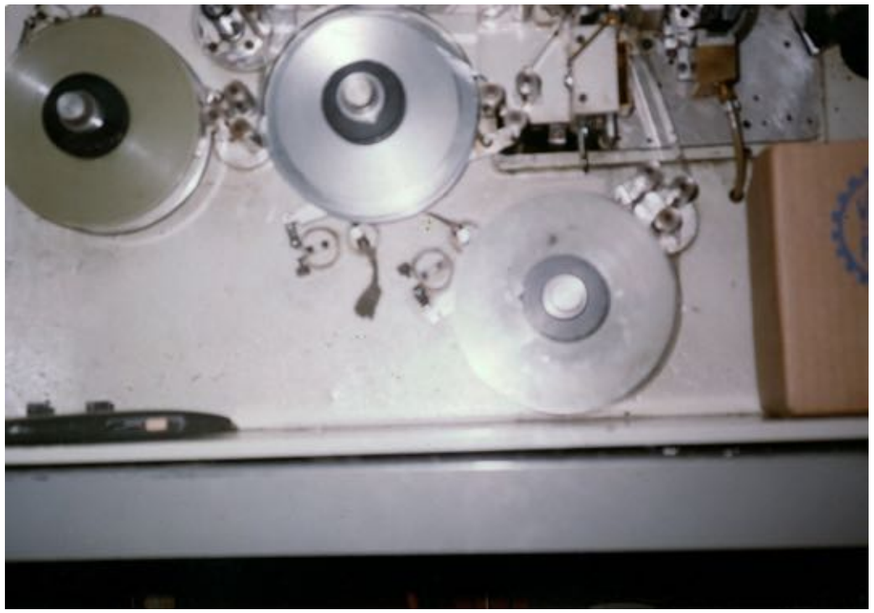
Boxes at Valley Forge, 1985-1991

From left: *Marching for Jobs*, 1985-1991; *Alarm Clock*, 2016

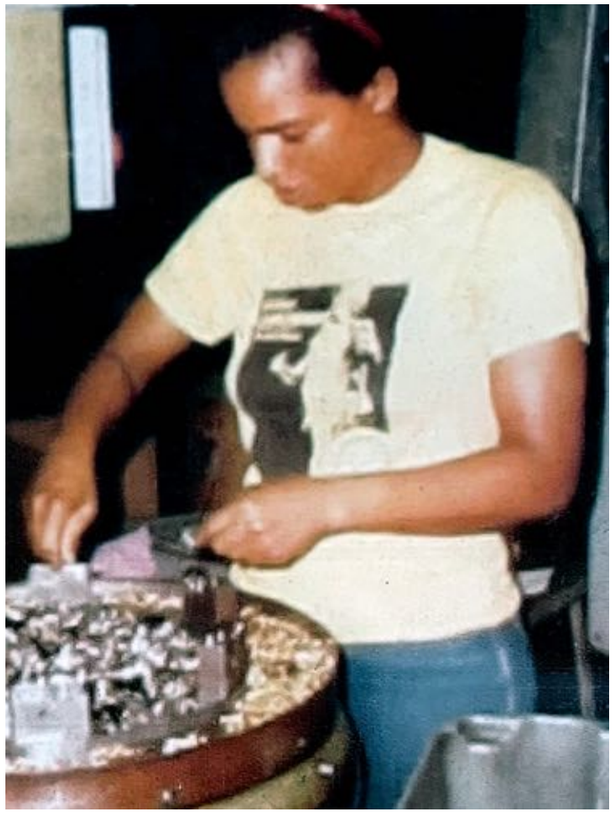
From left: *An Empty Photo Album*, 2016; *Grandma and Mom in Garden*, 1992

From left: *Grandma in Kitchen*, 1985–1991; *Vanity Box (Sitting Pretty)*, 2016

From left: *Faking Flowers*, 2016; *Vernice's Jamerican Table*, 1981



From left: *Equipment at Valley Forge*, 1985-1991; *Depression Glass Bowl*, 2016



From left: *Steel Pot*, 2016; *Grandma Working at Valley Forge II*, 1985–1991

From left: *Grandma Working at Valley Forge III*, 1985-1991; *Assimilation Blues*, 2016

Grandma Working at Valley Forge I, 1985-1991

From left: *Can of Ackee*, 2016; *Vernice Standing with Flowers*, 1985–1991

Nadiya I. Nacorda

All Orchids Are Fine
(2018-2021)

b. 1991
Syracuse, NY

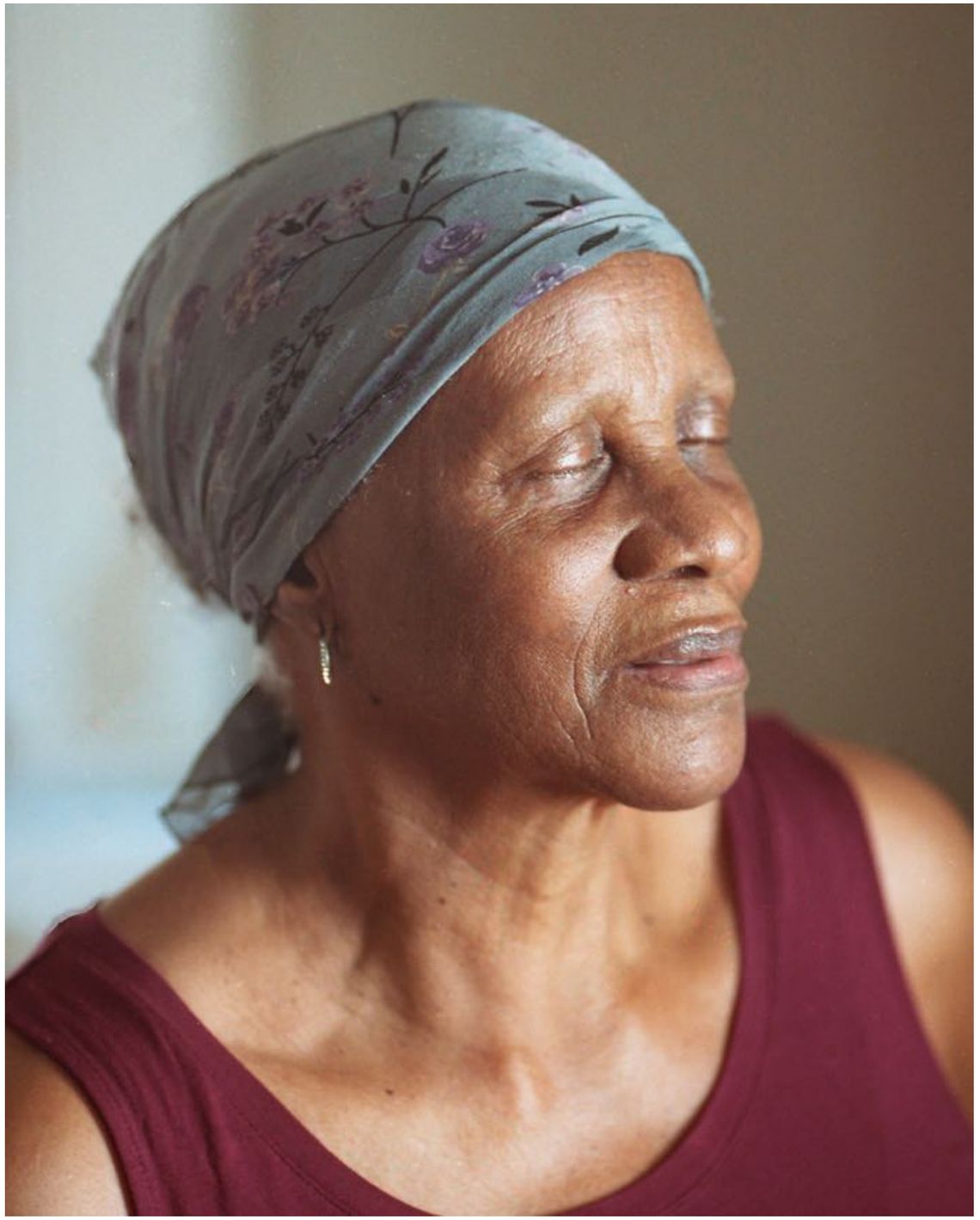
"My outward perceived identity shifts depending on where I am. I constantly occupy a multilayered and dimensional space in regards to my identity. I own, within myself and my work, that identity is never fixed and capable of true definition."

Untitled #1, 2019

Nadiya I. Nacorda creates a constellation of images which connect the lineage of women in her family. The linkages between images are not always clear at first glance, highlighting the gaps between generations and the slippery nature of family histories. Images of Nacorda's sister, mother, grandmother and of herself, recently a mother of twins, form an intergenerational and international family portrait. Contemporary images show Nacorda, pregnant with her children, while archival images of her grandmother in the Philippines were taken before the artist was born. The installation exudes tenderness and affection, which affirms the bonds between these women, even as time seems to slip backwards and forwards simultaneously.

From top: *Thula Thula Mahal (Hush Hush Love)*, 2021; *Gaya Gaya Puro Maya (Copycat)*, 2018

I saw her swallow all her feelings inside her until they are her whole, 2018



From top left: *Nana and Auntie Nakazi* , 2018; *Lola and Ninang in 1968*, 2020; *They dreamt of us/ A long time coming*, 2020

From Left: *Nadiya, Sasha and Nico: Twenty something weeks*, 2020; *All that is an unfathomable thing to do for another human being*, 2020; *I see you being/myself in you*, 2020

The Once and Future Past

Anita Bateman

If history is now, its convergence as neither memory nor past unravels the very idea of temporality. The aftermath of racial disaster—the unfolding and ever present effects of the transatlantic slave trade and anti-Black racism on every discernible aspect of modern life—means the past is never truly past. Blackness itself re social practice is a technology that situates the passing of time as ever present ensuring that history is never relegated entirely to time. As explained by Christina Sharpe's *In the Wake*, the disaster that produced the afterlives of slavery is constantly reanimated in the social conditions that collapse spatial and temporal distance. Rather than retreat to the logic that deems history as linear, Anique Jordan and Jay Simple reveal themselves as documentarians and archivists, venturing to the past in consideration of the future, controverting the accepted mundaneness of social issues including racism and endemic violence.

Anique Jordan's configuration of *Nowing: A Political History of the Present* at Silver Eye includes six annotated newspapers and one sculpture that is composed of thin sheet metal. The *Toronto Star* and its weekend edition, *The Sunday Star*, bear the fullness of Jordan's commentary in the form of extensive handwritten notes in which she contends with information consumption and the shortcomings of printed media. The headlines of the newspapers vary, and Jordan diarizes her thoughts as superscript, taking and "talking" over the text. Each issue of the *Star*, published in either 2020 or 2021, is given a new title by Jordan related to her thoughts, which are subsequently presented as marginalia. With titles like *Edge of Town*, *Codes*, *Essential*, and *Future*, the front pages of four of the six dailies highlight COVID-related analyses, and the de-prioritization of marginalized and racialized people in Toronto in regard to their access to medical care.

Jordan meditates on ideas concerning disposability, grief, and incalculable loss. In *Free*, the cover story denotes that Toronto's city council voted in favor of police reform rather than the motion to decrease even a fraction of the police's budget. A brown-skinned child, the lede image for another story, reaches out seemingly engaged in play. On the right side of the newspaper, Jordan writes, "COVID fear may go away but we never learn to cope with the fear for the life of our Black children. This is a specific kind of pandemic." Her commentary exposes the intersections of police brutality, surveillance and (failed) public policy, failures enhanced by the unrelated, but now inextricably linked, picture of the child and speculation about their future quality of life under oppression.

In the work entitled *Enough*, Jordan scrawls over three juxtaposed images of Egerton Ryerson, Samuel Peters Jarvis, and Peter Russell, white men who committed and supported atrocities, whose names mark eponymous townships and landmarks across Canada. Ryerson's collusion in the Indian Residential School System, and Jarvis and Russell's advocacy for the institution of slavery (as enslavers) are subject to scrutiny in the story, particularly on the issue of changing street names in Toronto. Jordan responds in turn with a missive to Black organizers and liberation work. Beginning, "We Have Done Enough," her text delivers the same message as her larger installation displayed on the Nia Art Center in Toronto: not only are there limits to Black folks' tolerance of abuse, but also that the attention racism demands diverts from Black self-preservation. In contrast to the seeping wounds that bear the names of white oppressors, her words act as a suture on the landscape, a different type of public monument and public reckoning. On the same paper, Jordan decries the hypocrisy of companies who seemingly support the Black Lives Matter movement, but concurrently "treat their employees like shit." Her message: that the performative allyship of capitalism and the public reckoning with racist histories are two sides of the same coin, and further pervasive racism begins and ends at recognition. The title—*Enough*— becomes a double entendre of things sacrificed and things taken, the capacity to inflict versus restrict harm.

Although not readily apparent, the *Untitled* sculptural work featured in *Radial Survey* draws its inspiration from Trinidadian carnival. Because of the traditional precedent of coding, or interjecting secret messages in a variety of forms within the African Diaspora, including in public celebrations across the Caribbean, the piece has embedded social and political context related to implicit cultural archetypes. As part of a larger body of work, it is one of eight sculptures that was created from corresponding photos of costumed performers. (The photos themselves are a type of sketch, and come from a performance called *Masqueraders*, in which the silhouettes of Jordan's friends served as models). The legion of sculptures recall ancestral figures who walk among us, spiritual interveners known as jumbees—or in the Trinidadian carnival context, a figure known as the Moko Jumbie. Suggested by the size of the ten-foot sculpture in the exhibition, these protective entities are larger than life, their height endowing them with the ability to foresee danger faster than their human counterparts. Jordan adopts the symbol of the Moko Jumbie, implicitly posing the question: "What are the types of carnival characters that we need to deal with the politics of now?" Jordan is not necessarily revisionist,

but instead confronts the unfolding present as a means to envision a (new? different? better?) future.

Jay Simple's work, however, does not lay claim to the same sort of "Black optimism" in regard to speculative future building. Rather, his pointed critique of the racial and social state of affairs, specifically in the United States, shows a unilateral uninterest and irreducible reluctance to "speak back" to whiteness, even if in issuing correctives. As part of Simple's series, *Exodus Home*, archival images, ephemera, and thrifted material are combined to contextualize the Great Migration (1916-1970), a period in which Black people from the agrarian South escaped in droves to industrializing metropolises in the hopes of circumventing racial terror. The optimism Simple revisits is one that was pervasive, but for many unrealized, as hordes of folks attached social mobility and racial progress to the postwar lie packaged and sold to them, otherwise known as the American Dream.

The mounted works on the gallery wall are in gold frames and interact with collaged and free-floating source material. Two examples of these framed works are *Red Summer: Issac Woodard Jr.* and *Red Summer: Birmingham 1963*. The designation Red Summer has been ascribed to the year 1919, specifically because of the anti-Black riots that took form as multi-city rampages. Committed by white terrorists whose racial anxieties were escalated by the economic downturn of the country, labor tensions, and perceived job and housing scarcity due to the influx of African Americans, these riots ravaged more than three dozen cities. Red Summer was a direct response to the Great Migration and the imagined threat of Blackness.

Red Summer: Issac Woodard Jr. depicts its namesake, decorated veteran Isaac Woodard, who, en route from Georgia to North Carolina in 1946, was beaten by a mob of white policemen, jailed, and subsequently blinded for the rest of his life. The day after his eyes were gouged out, in need of medical assistance, Woodard appeared before a white judge who fined *him* $50. The incident sparked national outrage, and is considered an early watershed moment for the civil rights movement. Similarly, 1963 was a year of unrelenting white terrorism as well as a defining moment for the movement. Birmingham became known as a site of extensive anti-segregation tactics, including lunch counter sit-ins, staged boycotts and demonstrations—the latter met with high pressure fire hoses and police dogs. Horrendously, it was also the place where four little girls were killed in the 16th Street Baptist Church bombing.

In the two *Red Summer* works, Simple chooses not to depict violence against Black people in plain form, and instead reproduces photographs of the student protesters and Sergeant Woodard, and covers them in gold leaf. The gold leaf serves as shield and laurel: a measure taken to prevent further injury by safeguarding their bodies as well as a means to

beatify, rather than fetishize, their unimaginable suffering and trauma. Simple acknowledges the shortcomings of the artistic decision to use a commodity (gold) to de-commodify the Black body, risking the subjects' reinscription, or re-commodification, as objects of consumption. It feels like a freighted *kintsugi*: at once, an effort to repair and offer reverence to that which is irreparable.

Simple's photo collages express his interest in the exploration of retro (futurism), specifically in his attention to space travel. Reimagining the Apollo 11 mission, Simple partially strikes though the headline "It's a 'Go' Today for Moonmen" in *Three Queens*, excising the word "men" and replacing the Apollo mission team with seminal Black women: astronaut Mae Jemison, *Star Trek* star Nichelle Nichols, and aerospace engineer Mary Jackson. To drive home the point, he crosses out the names of Armstrong, Collins, and Aldrin below. Today, the once aspirational fictionality of sending people to space has been reduced to a billionaire's vanity project. Far from idolizing Jeff Bezos, Richard Branson, or Elon Musk (another trio), and the conversation around white desire to replicate colonialism in space, Simple presents a better, more capable triumvirate of Black women, and in so doing, shifts the narrative to one anchored by Black escapism. This concept is supported by the reference to the character of Ricky in *Boyz n the Hood* and also by Simple's frustration with the U.S. political landscape symbolized by Trump 2020 propaganda. In speaking about the piece, Simple discusses the expansive relationship between Blackness, space, and the imagination, particularly in regard to the ways in which concepts around the "alien" are implicated in the same sort of fantasies about Black men. "ET is the Magical Negro," he expresses; a compelling argument.

Exodus, in the sense of mass departure from a place, as well as voyage to space, are recurring themes in *Water Wings: Marcus Garvey, Gold Dust Twins #2*, and *Gold Dust Twins #4*, which include images and texts about rockets, liftoff and leaving Earth. Photographs of Garvey himself appear in *Water Wings and Gold Dust Twins #4*. (Marcus Garvey's Black Star Line was celebrated in its time as an initiative to transport Black diasporans back to Africa, but was subsequently infiltrated and sabotaged by the FBI).

In *Gold Dust Twins #2*, Melba Roy Mouton, NASA mathematician and "human computer" appears next to rocket exhaust. Mounton's calculations for Echo Satellites 1 and 2 were absolutely invaluable for keeping track of the aircraft, but like many African American women at NASA, her contributions went unacknowledged and her intellectual labor was exploited. From the left corner, a leg and an arm carrying a laundry basket peeks out, a truncated image of one of the Gold Dust Twins, anti-Black caricatures that depict impoverished Black children engaged in domestic tasks. Derogatory images like these would

have been used to diminish Black labor, while at the same time the exploitation of that labor has always been indispensable for every conceivable industry in the United States; hence the proximity of the Gold Dust Twins image to Mouton's photograph. In *Gold Dust Twins #4,* another work that assembles images from American visual culture including pictures of Black children, a family of enslaved hostages and a toiling steel worker, the observation about extractive labor remains. According to Simple, the subtext is connected to the Great Migration, notably the hostility Black people would have encountered when arriving in these new environments.

Once a Visiting Assistant Professor at Longwood University (Farmville, VA), Simple lived in the neighboring town of Pamplin, and it is clear that his personal and professional ties to Virginia have influenced his excavation into state history. The archival print, *"Open-air" classroom at Moore Street School, 113 W. Moore Street, Richmond, VA 1916,* is at the center of his installation. Intended to curb the spread of tuberculosis, open air schools in the U.S. were segregated and systematically underfunded. In the image, the ambient light of the room reveals young faces that concentrate on the photographer. Due to inadequate heating, the children are wrapped in blankets. It is an uncomfortable scene that conjures images of indigenous boarding schools and forced assimilation and abuse. For Simple, the central placement of this image is important because it represents how we learn to function within society: through spaces of "education" which are subsequently hazardous spaces. Undoubtedly, the critique of institutional power is related to indoctrination abetted by/in the American school system, and the histories it tries to suppress about itself. The barbed wire, jagged pencils, and crucified bus seat of *The Longest Ride (Farmville Virginia Closes Public Schools for 5 Years)* similarly indicts the Prince Edward County school system, which closed its public schools from 1959–1964 rather than fully integrate. As a result, an all-white, private academy was created, while Black students were denied from being educated and had to be sent away or remain untaught. This is the danger of America for Simple—that it would sooner self-immolate (and simultaneously imperil others) than commit to racial justice.

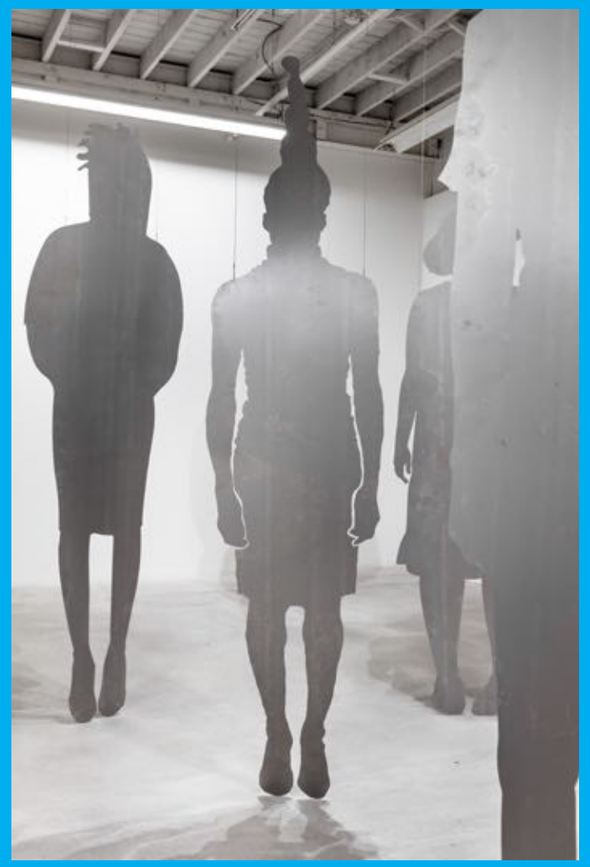
Simple's compositions are replete with historical allusions that exhibit his painstaking research. In discussing the works in *Radial Survey* and the community resource Photographer's Green Book, an organization he founded, he chronicles his process for making the eight-track sculptures featured in the biennial, cartridges that hold the soundtrack of Black migration—of driving around and the encounters one might have on the road. As thrifted objects, they have their own histories and trajectories with thrift shops serving as migratory terminals. He adds postcards and newspapers to them, recasting them to *show* history as well as to *have* history. These works feel symbolic of Black migrants, coming from all over, transforming and being transformed—for good or ill—by their itinerancy.

Through the process of critical reflection and intervention, Anique Jordan and Jay Simple utilize superimposition: the layering of images, words and ideas to speak about the fugitivity of time. Within their respective practices, which reflect the pervasiveness of cultural anamnesis, narratives are collapsible, and (re) writing the present becomes an exercise of actively making history. Although the conditions of possibility that Jordan wrestles with seem more resolute and decidedly less speculative in Simple's work, power structures are nonetheless deconstructed. Temporal paradoxes are taken as fact. With eidetic clarity, both Jordan and Simple clearly ask, "what are the archives of today?"

Anique Jordan

Nowing: A Political History of the Present (2020-2021)

Toronto, Ontario



"I am a first generation Canadian in a family of Caribbean women. My mother danced in her youth and put my brother and I in folk, drum and Afro-Caribbean dance lessons as children. We were encouraged to participate in Carnival. We had to know and understand the history of the jumbie, the blue devil, the fancy sailor, these characters and the pantheon of masqueraders that are central to old mas traditions were woven into the ways I understand how stories can be performed, how city space can be taken up, how political content and contexts can be masked and offered to a public to manipulate, distort and make new worlds from. It is in this procession that my work is grounded."

Pollen Knife (Margaret with Collected Pollen from my Mother's Camellia), 2014

Anique Jordan's installation includes six photographs of annotated newspapers and sculptural silhouettes. The newspaper images are from her hometown *Toronto Star* and its weekend edition, *The Sunday Star*. These pictures bear the fullness of Jordan's commentary in the form of extensive handwritten notes in which she grapples with information consumption and the narratives produced by media institutions. Jordan diarizes her thoughts directly on the newspaper page, speaking back to the headlines and meditating on ideas concerning disposability, grief, and incalculable loss stemming from the COVID pandemic as well as systemic racial injustice and violence. The sculptural works draw their inspiration from Trinidadian carnival, recalling ancestral figures who walk among us, spiritual interveners known as jumbees—or in the Trinidadian carnival context, a figure known as the Moko Jumbie. These protective entities are larger than life, their height endowing them with the ability to foresee danger faster than their human counterparts.

Blk Ops, 2021

TORONTO STAR

WEATHER HIGH 27 C | MOSTLY SUNNY | MAP A20

TUESDAY, JUNE 30, 2020

"I think about how all these pressed bodies, these firms of contact that help us survive can also be weaponized. These pressed bodies"

FREE

This is a huge victory for midwives and for pay equity — this acknowledgment of the invisibility of work that is associated with women, and the undervaluing of work that is associated with women. *Juana Berinstein, acting director of the Association of Ontario Midwives, after an Ontario court upheld a pay-equity ruling that will boost wages by 20 per cent, retroactive to 2011. Story, A2*

2020: The year white people discovered racism."

Council rejects motion to ask for 10% cut to police budget

Critics 'frustrated' as councillors instead endorse mayor's plan, which calls for body-worn cameras and no immediate defunding

JENNIFER PAGLIARO
CITY HALL BUREAU

City council on Monday rejected a move to ask the Toronto police to cut its budget in 2021 by at least 10 per cent, following weeks of protests calling on them to defund the police.

Instead, council voted in favour of a series of motions backed by Mayor John Tory, which propose reforms that don't include immediate defunding of the police.

These reforms include developing alternative ways for police to respond to calls that don't involve weapons, a call for the police services board to provide council with a line-by-line breakdown of the budget and ask that council "commit to eradicating racial profiling in policing."

One of Tory's motions approved by council will actually see the police budget increase by $5 million in 2021 — if the request for body-worn cameras for all officers is fully implemented.

The motion to ask the police to have all officers outfitted with cameras by next year passed 17 to 7.

"I'm very frustrated, but beyond that I am so incredibly embarrassed that this is our city council," Sandy Hudson, a co-founder of Black Lives Matter Toronto told the Star following the vote. Hudson's group had asked for at least 50 per cent to be cut from the budget.

She said it was "disrespectful" that councillors ignored studies that body-worn cameras make interactions worse, that they commended the police amid protests and that they promised to do things they've promised before.

"The level of discourse is just so shallow," said Hudson.

POLICE continued on A14

Inside

- Safety issues raised as in-person trials get set to resume, A2
- Why PM ended daily COVID-19 briefings? Delacourt, A4
- Ford vows overhaul of towing industry. A14

MORE COVERAGE INSIDE
Updates at thestar.com

Greenwood Park, Toronto

WHAT WILL THE kids remember? Maybe the perks: the miraculous reprieve from school or the sudden surge in screen time. Maybe the creepiness: masks everywhere, even familiar faces made foreign, or the nervous way their parents held them apart from their friends.

Anique Jordan *Nowing: A Political History of the Present*

SUNDAY STAR

WEATHER HIGH 25 C | THUNDERSTORMS | MAP A22

SUNDAY, AUGUST 2, 2020

"The team that's going to win the Stanley Cup is the one that doesn't get COVID, doesn't get hurt, and their goalie gets hot for about a month or two. That's who's going to win the Cup. *Steve McKichan, former Maple Leafs goaltending coach, in advance of tonight's series opener against Columbus. Feschuk, A15*

Tracing COVID's grim path

- Newly released data shows how virus slipped into city, then took hold of most vulnerable populations
- Officials emphasized 'we're all in this together.' But for some areas of the city, that just wasn't true

KATE ALLEN
SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY REPORTER
JENNIFER YANG
IDENTITY AND INEQUALITY REPORTER
RACHEL MENDELSON
STAFF REPORTER
ANDREW BAILEY
DATA ANALYST

Toronto has been in the coronavirus's grip for just over six months, though it may feel like a lifetime. The path of the virus has twisted wildly: nearly every month has brought a new upheaval.

In July, Toronto Public Health released an important dataset: a catalogue of every case reported in the city since the first known case in late January, roughly 15,300 total. Identifying details have been removed to protect privacy, but each case includes the person's age bracket, neighbourhood and source of infection; whether they were hospitalized, in critical care or intubated; whether they recovered, are still fighting infection, and more.

You might think you know the story of COVID-19 and Toronto. But the dataset, which TPH says it released in the interest of transparency, contains revelations about how the virus slipped into Toronto and gained a foothold before taking aim at the most vulnerable residents and neighbourhoods. The Star's

From Left: *Free*, 2021; *Codes* , 2021;

From left: *Edge of Town*, 2021; *Enough*, 2021

Blk Ops, 2021

Blk Ops, 2021

From Left: *Future*, 2021

Jay Simple

Exodus Home
(2020-2021)

b. 1987
Pamplin, VA

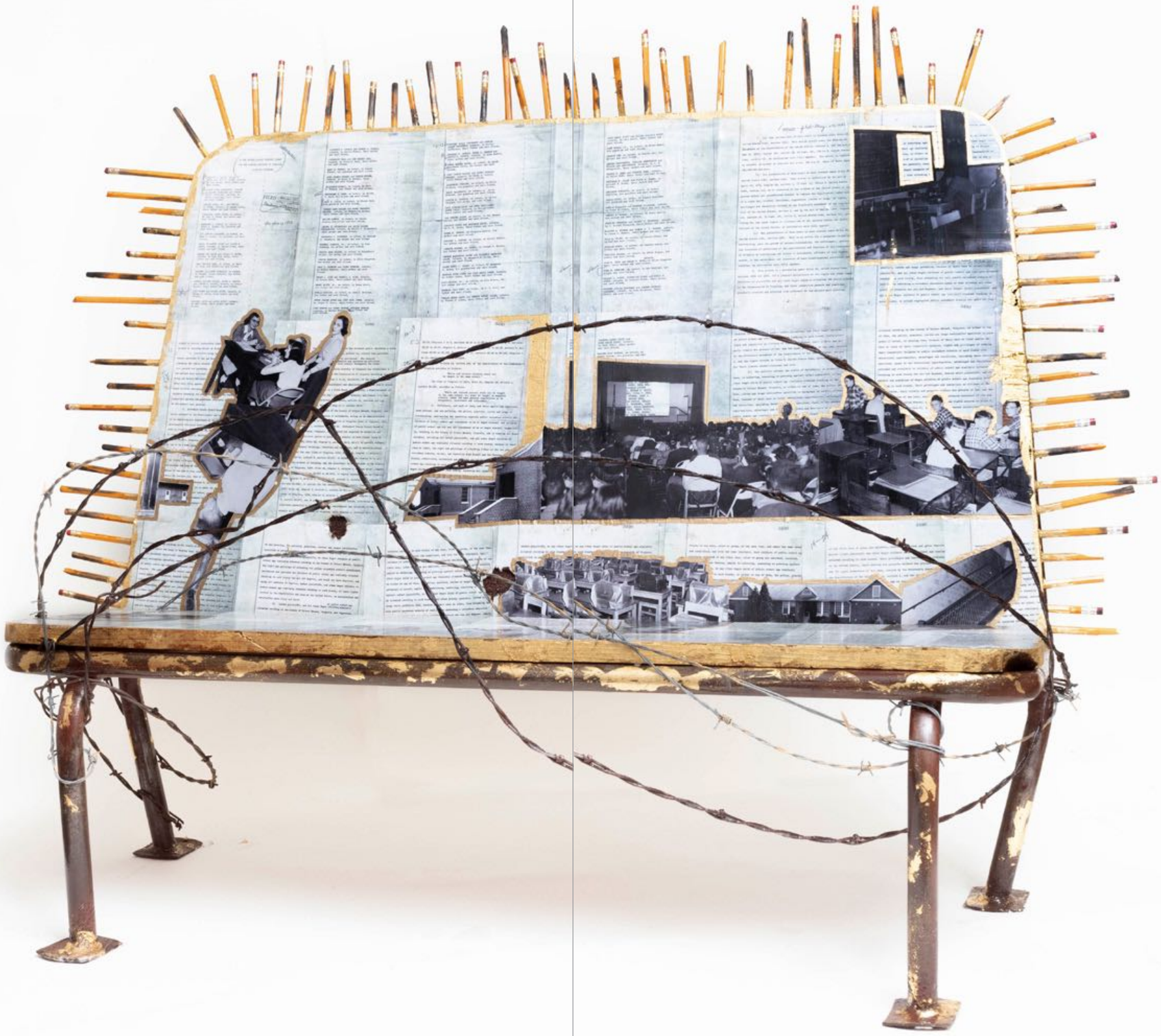
"My friend Anthony Francis posted a video in which he outlined how COVID made us self-isolate indoors and through this we found a desire for the streets, for socialization. At the same time, we were forced to sit inside and watch police murder those who ventured outside. A proverbial fourth wall crumbles. When I think about my surroundings and the work I do, I think of the resiliency in every breath, the courage and jubilation in defiantly being present, and the tragedy of standing, or kneeling, or dying in Babylon."

Red Summer: Isaac Woodar Jr., 2021

Jay Simple's work is a pointed critique of the racial and social state of affairs in the United States. His collages and sculptures are made from archival images, ephemera and thrifted material. Simple combines these media to contextualize the Great Migration (1916–1970), a period in which Black people from the agrarian South escaped in droves to industrializing metropolises in the hopes of escaping racial terror. This installation references many moments of racial violence and oppression that Black people have suffered, alongside imagined moments of joy including a depiction of an Apollo mission crew of all Black women. Simple's compositions are replete with historical allusions that draw from his painstaking research, delving into the past with a thoughtful nuance that encompasses anger, compassion, sorrow and hope.

Jay Simple *Exodus Home*

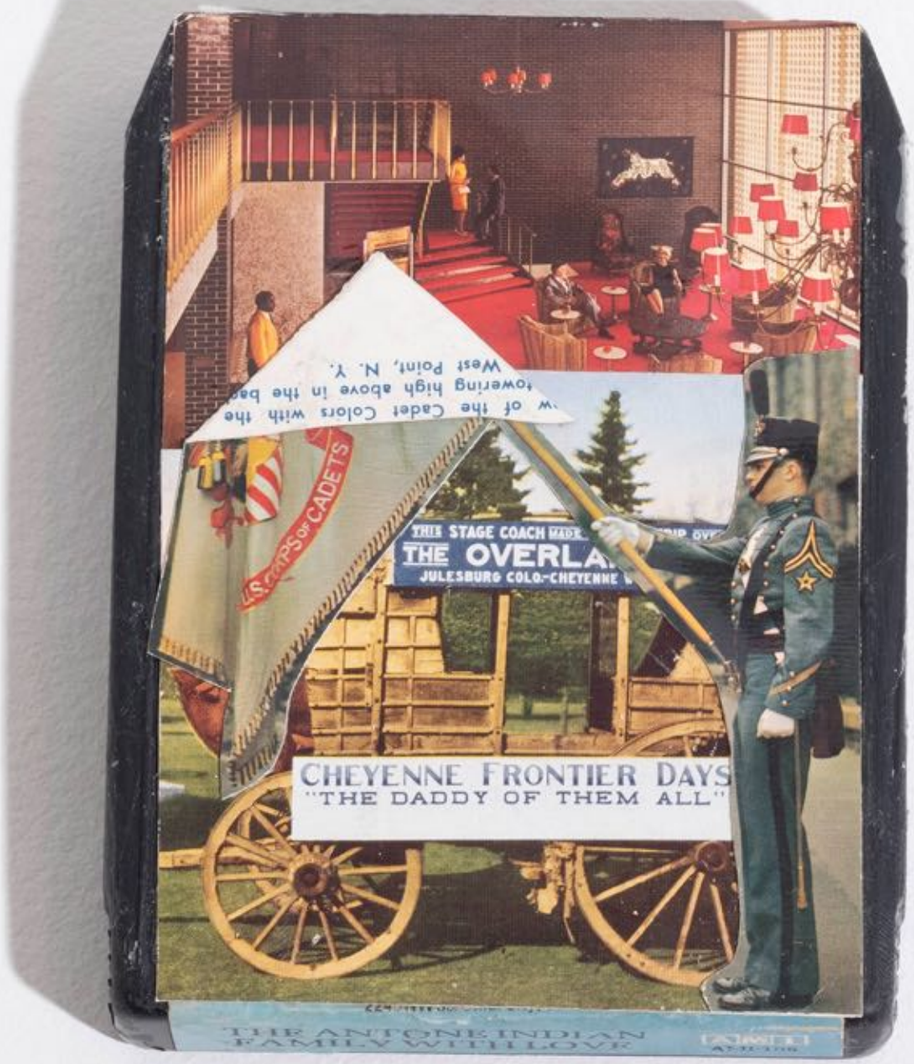
From Top: *Red Summer: Birmingham 1963*, 2021; *Gold Dust Twins #2*, 2021



The Longest Ride (Farmville Virginia Closes Public Schools for 5 Years), 2020

Jay Simple *Exodus Home*

From left: *8 Tracks and None of Them Good #2*, 2021; *Three Queens*, 2021



From left: *8 Tracks and None of Them Good #3*, 2021; *8 Tracks and None of Them Good #4*, 2021

"Open-air" classroom at Moore Street School, 1916

Why don't you live for the people?

Why don't you struggle for the people?

Why don't you die for the people?

Jay Simple *Exodus Home*

From left: *Water Wings: Marcus Garvey*, 2021; *Gold Dust Twins #4*, 2021

Jay Simple *Exodus Home*

From left: *8 Tracks and None of Them Good #1*, 2021; *Just MOVE (May 13, 1985)*, 2020

When Are We? Reflections on Time in the Radius

Kate Kelley

While each of the artists represented in this second iteration of the project wrestle with issues pertaining to specific places, the work of Ryan Arthurs, Njaimeh Njie, and Raymond Thompson Jr. is further concerned with not just where we are in the Radius, but *when*. Movement backward and forward in time is intrinsic to photography. We oscillate between the moment the photograph was created and the present as we interpret the social and cultural attitudes that surround it now. Temporality is taken up through different modes by these three artists, and their work varies widely in style and technique. The common impulse that runs through these images is to question how much temporal power we grant photographs, and what happens to the ways in which we understand them when time is paused, sped up, or even split in two.

Raymond Thompson Jr.'s series *Appalachian Ghosts* challenges the ways in which a specific moment in the history of West Virginia, the Hawks Nest Tunnel Disaster, has been largely obfuscated. The Hawks Nest Tunnel is a 3-mile construction project in Gauley Bridge, WV that diverted the New River as a means of increasing electrical power generation. Taking place between 1930 and 1935, the project coincided with the harshest years of the Great Depression, attracting a largely southern migrant, majority African American labor force. Working under brutal conditions, workers were repeatedly exposed to the mineral silica while mining for sandstone. Many would eventually develop the respiratory illness silicosis, leading to the largest ever recorded death toll from the disease. Outside of limited documentation and a modest monument, only a small graveyard memorializes workers who died in the tunnel,who were quickly and unceremoniously removed from the site at the time. There remains a severe dearth of information around the tragedy.

Appalachian Ghosts is an archive in and of itself, attending to those who were most harshly impacted and least commemorated. Two of the series within the project, entitled *The Dust and Tunnelitis*, make visible the largely forgotten history surrounding the Hawks Nest Tunnel's construction, through a process of reenacting and reimagining the experience of working within it. In large-scale photographs, African American figures grip ladders, hoses or metal pipes, linking them to the materials and actions of industry. Their identities remain partially hidden, cloaked in a haze of white dust which recalls the deadly silica unearthed in the mining process. In two photographs, the front and back of a hand are coated in a white powder that has settled into the delicate lines around the fingertips and cuticles, rendering them as ghostly forms. Connecting to past narratives is a difficult task, as the expansive divide between a lived experience and the visual and material artifacts that remain can feel insurmountable. In these photographs, viewers encounter an embodied vision of the suffocation and disorientation workers would have encountered in their labor. Using the research he has undertaken in the present, Thompson Jr.'s photographs give recognition to these spectral figures from the past, anchoring their history with a distinct humanity amidst the floating clouds of dust.

Like Thompson Jr., photographer, filmmaker and multimedia producer Njaimeh Njie is interested in centering individual stories, pulling them out of larger systems and power structures and putting them front and center. Njie's work documents contemporary Black life, with a particular emphasis on her hometown of Pittsburgh, looking at what past histories have shaped the city's present and how they may shape its future. Her body of work, *This Is Where We Find Ourselves*, was made possible through a commission from the Heinz Foundation that asked the artist to "mark this moment in time." Specifically the project asked Njie to respond to the impacts of COVID and the discussions around systemic injustices that were prevalent in the spring and summer of 2020. Using the impetus of the commission to walk through her city, Njie documented signage about mask wearing, the Black Lives Matter movement, halted construction projects and closed businesses. As the project progressed, she started including personal archival photos as well. Njie covered a wide swathe of Pittsburgh, tracing her family's lineage in the city—where they came from, where they lived, what their neighborhoods were like. *This Is Where We Find Ourselves* looks at the turmoil and drastic change the pandemic brought into Pittsburgh, but also how much of that difficulty has been present for Black residents all along.

This Is Where We Find Ourselves interweaves two different layers of geography. Njie's handwriting appears at the base of many images, making note of where she is taking the photograph. In this first layer, she identifies exact places throughout Pittsburgh such as the Homestead Steel Works or a section of the Pennsylvania Railroad. The second layer is full of more personal coordinates, places labeled simply as "Grandma's House" or "The Alley." There is a palimpsest-like effect to these images, as they document the lingering traces of once-prominent neighborhoods, schools and businesses that have been erased from the city's landscape to make room for present-day event centers or boutique apartment complexes. The combination of

handwritten words and images make huge socioeconomic impacts like that of gentrification and the shuttering of the steel industry into an intimate narrative. This work also exists as a book, giving viewers a chance to reflect on the recent past of an ongoing pandemic, the deeper past which has seen entire neighborhoods erased or displaced, and the possibilities of what the future could hold. It's a bittersweet space to occupy. The family photos are filled with the joy that tight-knit family and community spaces create, while those of dilapidated houses or closed businesses are almost haunted. Njie wants to believe that having time and space to reflect will allow fractured communities to become whole and keep fighting for change in the future, but at the same time, she recognizes that "we should never have had to fight at all."

Holding space for community is also a central thread in the work of Ryan Arthurs. Arthurs lives and works in Buffalo, New York, an area of the country he grew up in and eventually made the decision to return to: a "Buffalo Boomerang". Like many places within the Radius, Western New York can feel vastly culturally different across very short distances, and Arthurs returned to Buffalo with a desire to create space for collectivity and connection.

Nothing of Weeds is a new body of work which draws influence from the 1977 publication *The Faggots and Their Friends Between Revolutions*, which was written by Larry Mitchell, and illustrated by Ned Asta. The compact volume describes a fantastical queer community carving out joy, beauty, humor and pleasure in the cracks of a declining empire dominated by an oppressive male military force. It has been a guiding force for Arthurs, imparting lessons to a present day generation of queer people as to how to survive, and thrive, amidst systems of oppression.

Lush overgrowth, blooming fruit trees and verdant forest spaces fill these photographs. A male figure, visible in glimpses, bathes freely in river water and holds a sliced and dripping watermelon above himself in an ecstatic gesture. These images appear Eden-like, yet there are some significant complications. Weeds, another touchstone for Arthurs as symbols of resilience and intrusion, flourish side by side with wildflowers in this garden. Tangled weeds mixing with intentionally cultivated fields fuels a sense of inclusion and a desire to foster growth for those voices which are often seen as undesirable. In several photographs, such as *The great gardens of the fairies prosper*, Arthurs has created combination prints, resulting in an image that looks like an almost-too-perfect rendering: a portal into an alternative space. Among the images of verdant growth are three photographs of water and fire, entitled *Eternal Flame*, where the slippery forces of flames and liquid are halted, shimmering in mid-air. Aptly titled, these photographs add a sense that the world in which these images exist is timeless.

Arthurs' work begs the question—what would happen if we ceased to place so much importance on the flow of time? Large stretches of land surrounding Buffalo still include political posters and banners and flags, faded, but enduring, as though the 2016 election were ongoing. The wild gardens and watery underworlds of Arthurs' photographs beckon as spaces of respite and revelry, a world apart from the reminders of divisive political speech. Yet, these aren't spaces that have fully turned their backs on the landscape that exists around them. Representations of change are most often grounded in forward motion, through action, protest or rebellion. Yet holding ground for rest, joy and pleasure is an essential element in the struggle for change. What could a more radical act of self-care be than the decision to slip away from the march towards progress so that we can rest and return, ready to renew our individual efforts. The landscape of Western New York is changing, but the red flags and banners might be there for quite some time. If the quest for change is urgent, it can also be slow, and for Arthurs, having places to pause, enjoy, and feel intimately connected to one's surroundings is essential in weathering the road.

Njie, Thompson Jr., and Arthurs leverage the element of time in photography to challenge inequity and to recuperate discarded narratives, but they also aspire to visualize spaces of care, remembrance and safety for the people and places to which their work is attuned. Thompson Jr.'s portraits are a counterforce to the disappearance of the legacies of the laborers whose names and faces have largely vanished from history. Njie fiercely affirms the warmth and safety of her communities and neighborhoods even as she documents their displacement. Arthurs envisions a queer utopia, nurturing the radical possibility of creating new and imagined spaces right within our own reality. In the end, maybe time is inherent to photography, but it's also flexible and therefore able to be wielded in different ways, to different ends. All three of these artists reject notions of resolution, as their work endeavors to keep the past active in the present and create testaments to persistence for the future. These photographs are on their own timelines: unfinished, and yet to be determined, looking backward as they move forward.

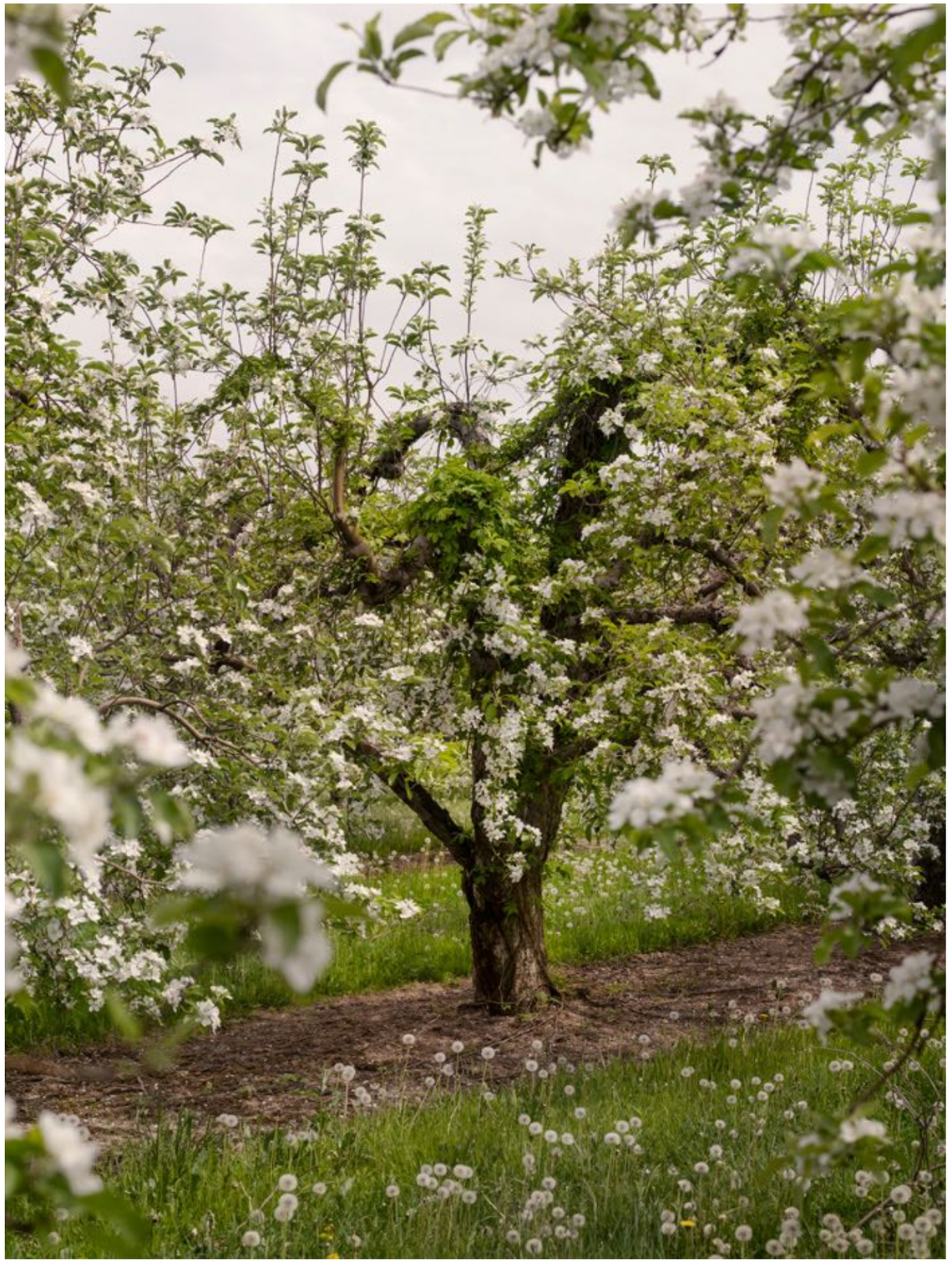
Ryan Arthurs

Nothing of Weeds
(2017-2021)

b. 1983
Buffalo, NY

“My aim is to explore the interplay of degradation and verdancy across rural landscapes within western New York. Weeds and flora within this series are a doubled metaphor for the preponderance of right-wing ideologies in rural communities, while speaking to the struggles of finding and maintaining presence as a queer person. These narratives struggle against one another throughout the series—in photographs made during the preceding presidential election, its aftermath, and through the aggregate of a global pandemic—adding tension to otherwise bucolic landscapes. As with earlier bodies of work, this series explores a multitude of histories and narratives, both personal and regional.”

Ryan Arthurs has been making documentary photographs in western New York and the Midwest for several years. Growing up in Buffalo, NY, these are places that feel familiar for the artist, yet as a queer man Arthurs has also experienced them to be alienating spaces, where maintaining identity and presence can be a struggle. In *Nothing But Weeds* Arthurs interrogates the tensions that exist in this part of the world, looking to the interplay of verdant growth and hostile ideologies across the rural landscapes surrounding Buffalo. Weeds serve as a metaphor for growth and persistence, and Arthurs' photographs envision a vibrant, utopia-like Eden, where weeds and intentionally cultivated flowers and fruit trees blossom and thrive together.

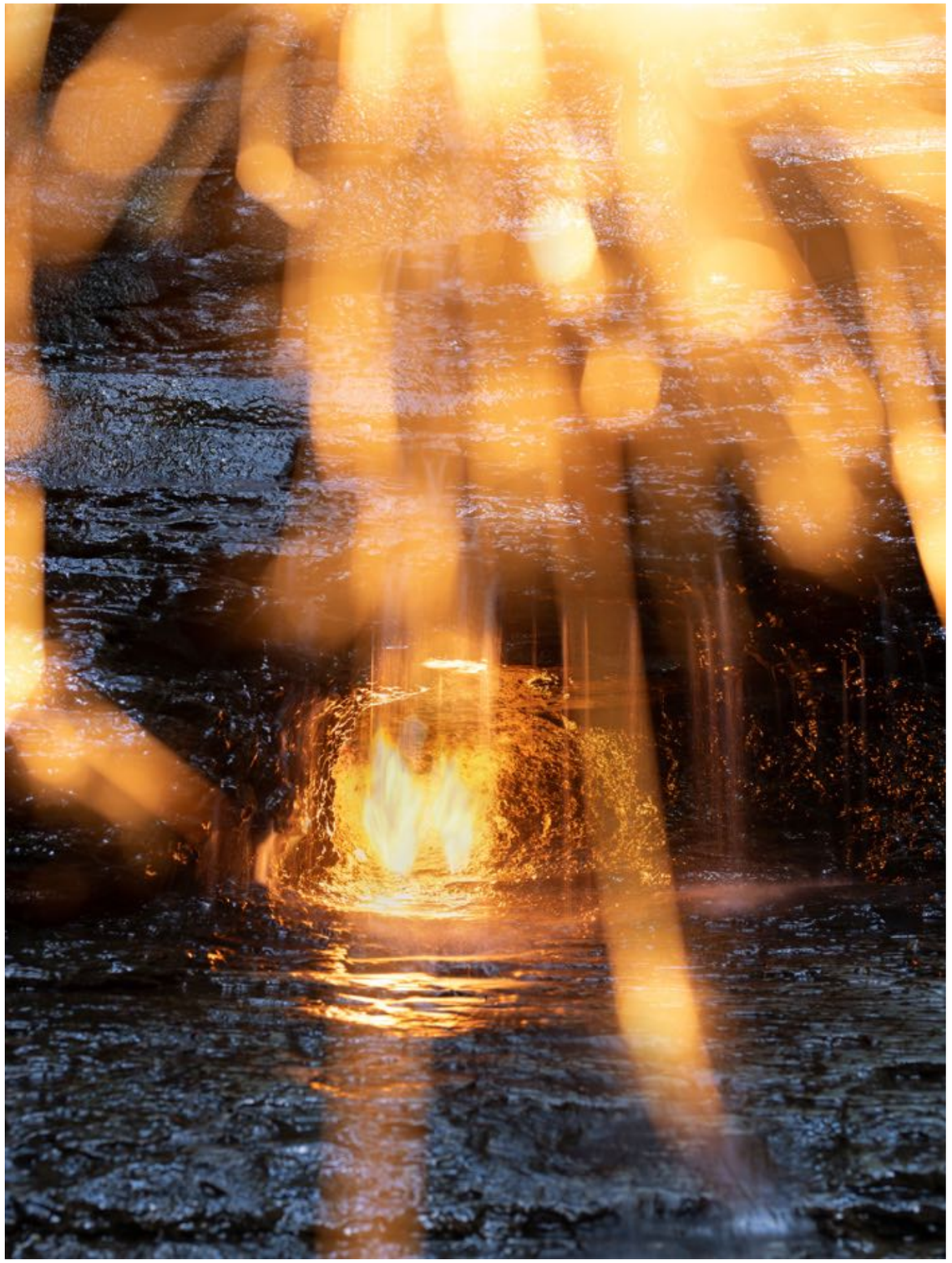


"Orchard was the most beautiful of all...", 2020

Radial Survey *Nothing of Weeds*

From top left: *"The great gardens of the fairies prosper"*, 2019; *Eternal Flame I*, 2021; *Dreamboat*, 2020

"These parts of the past are never lost", 2021



From left: *"Shower the plants with love"*, 2020; *Eternal Flame II*, 2021

From top left: *The Watermelon Patch*, 2017; *"... remain quiet so the soft sexual noises can be heard."*, 2020; *"Warm, woody spaces, softly illuminated"*, 2020

Eternal Flame III, 2021

Njaimeh Njie

This Is Where We Find Ourselves
(2020-2021)

b. 1988
Pittsburgh, PA

"*This Is Where We Find Ourselves* began as a response to the pandemic, and the uprisings of the summer of 2020. As I started making pictures in my hometown of Pittsburgh, I realized I was gravitating towards sites that were connected to my personal history, my family's history, and Black history in the city. The throughline is that many of these spaces have been shuttered, gentrified, or demolished altogether. This body of work is an exploration of how this legacy of loss has brought us to today, and it's a meditation on the people, the memories and the communities that have brought us this far."

Panel from *This is Where We Find Ourselves*, 2021

As a photographer and filmmaker Njaimeh Njie centers individual stories, pulling them forward from larger systems and power structures. Njie's project, *This Is Where We Find Ourselves*, began through a commission from Silver Eye, funded by the Heinz Endowments, which asked artists to respond to the impacts of COVID in Pittsburgh and the discussions around systemic injustices that were prevalent in the spring and summer of 2020. Using this commission as a launching point, Njie's project moves forward and backward in time, using contemporary imagery, archival family photos and the artist's handwritten narrative to look at how the present moment has been exacerbated by decades of oppression and neglect in the Black communities of Pittsburgh.

Panel from *This is Where We Find Ourselves*, 2021

Pearl Street and Conway Way 05/19
The Back Way

And home is morning shortcuts to
school with WAMO, or the news,
or 70's Soul on the radio.

1800 Ninth St. 04/19
The Breakfast Spot

These days, home is something to
hold onto when nothing's like it was.

2717 Centre Ave. 08/19
The Corner Store

Home is something to question
when too much is like it's been.

2040 Centre Ave. 06/19
The Old Store

And home is something to search for
as the spaces grow between us.

Circa Wylie & Fullerton Avenue 07/19
The Lower Hill / Former Civic Arena

Spaces that fill the neighborhoods
that were razed while they called
it renewal.

E. Waterfront Drive, Homestead 08/19
Former Second Ward Neighborhood

Spaces that echo through my family's
stories of their lives in the shadow
of the mills —

W. Waterfront Drive, Homestead 09/19
Former U.S. Steel Homestead Works

That would also join the trail of
ruins that stretches across this
place.

1532 Lincoln Ave. 10/19
The Last House

6325 Penn Ave. 11/19
Former Club One Fitness

So in case my story is lost in this
city that breaks itself down—

5704 Penn Ave. 12/19
Former Penn Plaza Apartments

Or buried in this place that makes
itself over, and over again —

Bakery Square Boulevard 13/19
Former Nabisco Plant | Reizenstein School

I'll tell them that we're more than
these voids we've been made to inherit.

3101 Forbes Ave. 14/19
Former Original Hot Dog Shop

I'll tell them that home is still
where we can't wait to kick it, even
when there's no one left inside in fine.

4101 Bigelow Blvd 15/19
Former Schenley High School

That home is still our high school,
even without the lessons or laughter
inside to fill it.

6021 Penn Ave. 16/19
Former Ace Athletic

And home is still window shopping at
the flyest shops, even when there's
nothing left inside to see.

5122 Penn Ave. 17/19
The New Sign

Now, there are signs I read, and signs
that have been here all along.

2164 Centre Ave. 18/19
The Old Sign

After all — it's a long loss, that's brought us here.

Woodbine Street 19/19
The House (Night)

So we come home, and we remember, because the city will forget.

Raymond Thompson Jr.

Appalachian Ghosts
(2018-2019)

b. 1978
Morgantown, WV

"When you look out at the American landscape nothing is as it seems. Every tree, mountain, and river has stories to tell. One of my guiding questions has been "where am I in all this beauty?" I know that my roots run deep in the land, but there is a veil obscuring those stories making them nearly impossible to find. As a black artist, I'm sensitive to the ways the black body is subject to being both hypervisible and invisible at the same time. These feelings moved with me as I navigated the rural spaces of Appalachia. I want to uncover the narratives about black people that have been forgotten or buried."

Tunnelitis #1, 2019

Using his training as a photojournalist and documentary photographer, Raymond Thompson Jr. addresses the exclusion of African American narratives from visual and historical archives. *Appalachian Ghosts* centers on the little-known disaster around the construction of the Hawks Nest Tunnel in West Virginia. During the construction process, hundreds of African American and other migrant laborers became infected with debilitating, and often deadly, respiratory issues from the mineral silica, which unearthed in large quantities during the mining process. Thompson Jr.'s images embody the suffocating disorientation of the worker's experience, as white dust swirls and obscures laboring hands and bodies.

The Dust #4, 2019

Clockwise from top left: *The Dust, #2*, 2018; *Tunnelitis #4*, 2019; *The Dust #5*, 2019

Raymond Thompson Jr. *Appalachian Ghosts*

Clockwise from top left: *Tunneliris #2*, 2019; *The Dust #1*, 2018; *The Dust #6*, 2019

Inheritance
may be given to
us, but what
we do with it is
never a given.

Radial Survey Vol.2 Artists

HANNAH ALTMAN is a Jewish-American artist from New Jersey. She holds an MFA from Virginia Commonwealth University. Through photographic-based media, her work interprets relationships between gestures, the body, lineage, and interior space. She has recently exhibited with the Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art, Blue Sky Gallery, the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust, and Photoville Festival. Her first monograph *Kavana*, published by Kris Graves Projects, is in the permanent collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Thomas J. Watson Library.

RYAN ARTHURS is a visual artist living in Buffalo, NY. He holds an MFA from Massachusetts College of Art and Design, and has previously held positions at Carleton College and Harvard University. In 2020, Arthurs founded Rivalry Projects in Buffalo, a space for the exhibition of emerging, mid-career and underrepresented artists working in all media, with an emphasis on contemporary photography. Arthurs is additionally a founding member of Houseboat Press, a photography publishing company.

NAKEYA BROWN holds an MFA from the George Washington University and her work has been featured internationally and nationally, with recent solo exhibitions at Hobart & William Smith College (2021) and The Delaplaine Art Center (2020). Her work has been included in recent group exhibitions at the Katonah Museum (2021) and Higher Pictures Generation (2020). Her work has been included in the photography books, *MFON: Women Photographers of the African Diaspora*; *Girl on Girl: Art and Photography in the Age of the Female Gaze*; and *Babe*.

ANIQUE JORDAN is an artist, writer and curator who looks to answer the question of possibility in everything she creates. Jordan has lectured on her artistic and community-engaged curatorial practice as a 2017 Canada Seminar speaker at Harvard University and in numerous institutions across the Americas. As an artist, she has exhibited in galleries such as Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO), Art Gallery of York University (AGYU), Art Gallery of Guelph (AGG), Doris McCarthy Gallery, the Wedge Collection, Art Gallery of Windsor (AGW), Gallery 44 and Y+ Contemporary.

NADIYA I. NACORDA works in photography, video and performance. Focusing on images of herself and

family, her work draws heavily from notions of intimacy, affection, secrecy and generational inheritance within matriarchal lineage. She is currently pursuing an MFA in Art Photography at Syracuse University's School of Visual and Performing Arts. Her first book: *A Special Kind of Double* was published in 2020 by KG Projects as a part of the LOST books collection.

NJAIMEH NJIE is a photographer, filmmaker, and multimedia producer. She holds a BA from Washington University in St. Louis. In her practice, Njie uses the built environment as a means of exploring how the past has shaped contemporary life. Her work has been exhibited at the Carnegie Museum of Art and Pittsburgh International Airport, and she has presented at venues including TEDxPittsburghWomen, and Harvard University.

JAY SIMPLE is a visual artist originally from Philadelphia but is migratory like his ancestors between Virginia and New York. Simple holds an MFA from the Rhode Island School of Design, and is the founder of The Photographers Green Book, a resource for inclusion, equity and diversity within the photographic community. Working through photography and a variety of mediums, Simple examines historical and contemporary effects of colonialism and white-centric ideology within the context of the United States.

RAYMOND THOMPSON JR. holds an MFA in photography from West Virginia University. He received his Masters degree from the University of Texas at Austin in journalism and graduated from the University of Mary Washington with a BA in American Studies. He has worked as a freelance photographer for The New York Times, The Intercept, NBC News, Propublica, WBEZ, Google, Merrell and the Associated Press. He is currently Assistant Professor of Photojournalism at the University of Texas, Austin.

Contributing Writers

ANITA BATEMAN specializes in modern and contemporary African art and the art of the African diaspora with additional expertise in the history of photography, Black Feminism/Womanism, and the role of social media in activism and liberation work. Bateman earned a Ph.D. in Art History & Visual Culture and a Graduate Certificate in African and African American Studies from Duke University, an M.A. in Art History from Duke University, and a B.A. in Art History cum laude from Williams College. She has held curatorial positions at the RISD Museum, the Williams College Museum of Art, and the Nasher Museum of Art. Her research has been supported by the American Council of Learned Societies, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation, and the Social Science Research Council. Bateman was recently appointed Associate Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston and is currently based in Houston, TX (Karankawa territory).

LEO HSU lives in Pittsburgh where he teaches in the photography program at Carnegie Mellon University. He has written extensively for Fraction Magazine and worked on the development of the pioneering photography website Foto8.com. Leo has co-curated several exhibitions at the Silver Eye Center for Photography in Pittsburgh, where he serves on the board. He has worked as a newspaper photographer in New Mexico and New Jersey and holds a PhD in Anthropology from New York University.

KATE KELLEY is a curator and art historian specializing in photography and contemporary art, and the Deputy Director for Silver Eye Center for Photography. She holds an MA in the History of Art from Williams College, and has previously held curatorial and research roles at the Williams College Museum of Art, Carnegie Museum of Art and 10x10 Photobooks, among others.

LIZ PARK is Richard Armstrong Curator of Contemporary Art at Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh. She was most recently Curator of Exhibitions at the University at Buffalo Art Galleries, State University of New York, and was Associate Curator of the 2018 Carnegie International. She has curated exhibitions at a wide range of institutions, including

Western Front, Vancouver; The Kitchen, New York; Institute of Contemporary Art at the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia; Miller Institute for Contemporary Art at Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh; and Seoul Art Space Geumcheon. Her writing has been published by Afterall online, Afterimage, ArtAsiaPacific, Performa magazine, Fillip, Yishu: A Journal of Contemporary Chinese Art, Pluto Press, and Ryerson University Press, among others. She was a Helena Rubinstein Fellow at the Whitney Independent Study Program in 2011–12 and Whitney-Lauder Curatorial Fellow at ICA Philadelphia in 2013–15.

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Inheritance

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Silver Eye promotes the power of contemporary photography as a fine art medium by creating original exhibitions, unique educational programing, and a space for artists to learn, create, and connect through our digital lab. Our programs are dedicated to supporting the work of emerging, mid-career and under-recognized artists and sharing that work with our diverse audiences in engaging and meaningful ways.

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A survey of emerging and mid-career photo-based artists working within 300 miles of Pittsburgh.

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