

## MEDIA RELEASE

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**STUDIO  
MUSEUM  
HARLEM**

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## THE STUDIO MUSEUM IN HARLEM CHARTS A CONSTELLATION AMONG GENERATIONS OF ARTISTS, AND DELVES INTO THE MANY TONES AND GRADATIONS OF “BLACK,” IN ITS FALL/WINTER EXHIBITION SEASON



Billie Zangewa, *Mother and Child*, 2015. Courtesy the artist and Afronova

**New York, NY, October 7, 2015**—The Studio Museum in Harlem today announced its fall/winter season of exhibitions and projects, opening to the public on November 12, celebrating the work of multiple generations of modern and contemporary artists of African descent.

This season, the exhibitions focus strongly on the Studio Museum’s rich permanent collection and on works by alumni of the renowned *Artist-in-Residence* program, while also presenting a wealth of very recent works by younger artists who are being shown at the Studio Museum for the first time. Exploring the multiple ties that connect artists across more than half a century, and delving equally into urgent social and political concerns and absorbing formal issues, the exhibitions immerse Studio Museum visitors in the depth, complexity, nuance and vigor of these ongoing traditions. Fall/winter 2016 exhibitions and projects are on view from November 12, 2015 to March 6, 2016.

### ***A Constellation***

Like a figure glimpsed in a group of stars, the exhibition *A Constellation* traces connections among twenty-six artists of African descent: eight who emerged in the mid- to late twentieth century, and who are represented in the exhibition by now-historical works from the Studio Museum’s permanent collection, and eighteen younger artists whose works are being shown at the Studio Museum for the first time. As suggested by the title, *A Constellation* claims to be only one of the many configurations that might be discerned among this dynamic gathering of kindred artists and the concerns that animate their work. At the same time, however, the exhibition draws lines that clearly link these

artists across the generations, through themes that are urgent at the present moment—including questions of race, class and the body—and that were also urgent decades ago.

*A Constellation* presents a dazzlingly diverse group of more than thirty artworks made in a wide variety of media, ranging from oil on canvas to mixed media works and installations. Among the connections made in the exhibition are the ties between Billie Zangewa (b.1973), a Malawian-born, South Africa-based artist who explores the female experience in her 2015 silk tapestry *Mother and Child*, and two artists of the senior generation with similar concerns but contrasting formal means, sculptor Elizabeth Catlett (1915–2012) and textile-based artist Faith Ringgold (b. 1930). *Too Obvious* (1996) by David Hammons (b. 1943) is a mordant critique of the economic system; *Pass-Thru* (2014), a Plexiglas sculpture by Cameron Rowland (b. 1988) is similar in its concern with economic inequality and also takes a conceptual approach, but with a cooler, more minimalist tone. The alter egos adopted by Adrian Piper (b. 1948) to challenge viewers' expectations about race and gender connect with the multimedia work of Sondra Perry (b. 1986), whose *Double, Quadruple, Etcetera, Etcetera I* (2015) shows the partially erased video image of a performer undergoing violent convulsions in a small white room. The history of African people in the diaspora is addressed in Mel Edwards's welded steel sculpture *Working Thought* (1985), from the "Lynch Fragment" series, and in photographer Nona Faustine's *From Her Body Sprang Their Greatest Wealth* (2013). *A Constellation* also honors the lineage of abstract art that connects some of these artists across the generations, including Al Loving's crisp, hard-edged compositions such as *Variations on a Six Sided Object* (1967) and Torey Thornton's contemporary explorations of color and material. *A Constellation* is organized by Amanda Hunt, Assistant Curator.



Elizabeth Catlett, *Mother and Child*, 1993. The Studio Museum in Harlem; Museum Purchase

### ***Black: Color, Material, Concept***

As an element of art and design, “black” is both a seemingly basic part of visual experience and an amazingly rich gradation of tones and depths. As a word, it is a one-syllable locus for meanings that can fill columns in a dictionary. As a social construction, it is one of the most highly charged and proudly asserted realities in American life. The exhibition *Black* delves into the ways that modern and contemporary artists of African descent have considered the possibilities of “black” through their choice of media, their imagery and the ideas they bring to their work. The exhibition includes more than two dozen paintings, sculptures and prints, drawn primarily from the Studio Museum’s



Noah Davis, *Black Wall Street*, 2008. The Studio Museum in Harlem; gift of David Hoberman

incomparable permanent collection. The list of twenty-two artists represented in the exhibition ranges from modernist elders such as Sam Gilliam (b. 1933) and Jack Whitten (b. 1939), to a mid-century generation that includes, Kerry James Marshall (b. 1955), Glenn Ligon (b. 1960), Leonardo Drew (b. 1961), and Nari Ward (b. 1963), to artists who came of age in the post-Civil Rights era, such as Kara Walker (b. 1969), Noah Davis (1983-2015) and Kameelah Janan Rasheed (b. 1985). *Black* is organized by Lauren Haynes, Associate Curator, Permanent Collection.

### ***Marc Andre Robinson: Twice Told***

“One ever feels his two-ness,” wrote W.E.B. DuBois in *The Souls of Black Folk*—“an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings...” Marc Andre Robinson, an alumnus of the Studio Museum’s 2005 *Artist-in-Residence* program, has drawn on DuBois’s thought for the title of his new work of minimalist sculpture, *Twice Told*, presented as a solo exhibition. In *Twice Told*, Robinson suspends the disassembled pieces of chairs from the ceiling of the gallery to form two curving lines. Among its other associations, this dual, undulating, whip-like shape evokes unsettling parallels between an American history born out of slavery and our contemporary society. *Marc Andre Robinson: Twice Told* is organized by Naima J. Keith, Associate Curator, and Hallie Ringle, Senior Curatorial Assistant.

### ***Focus: Danielle Dean***

In the latest of its “Focus” series of single-work exhibitions, the Studio Museum presents *True Red* (2015), a new video animation by artist Danielle Dean that explores the capacity for objects to seemingly acquire lives of their own, and offers a droll comment on the efforts of marketers to grant “life” to commodities. Dean borrows the title of her work from the name of an athletic shoe that Nike released in 2003, True Red, marketing it as “the vampire sneaker.” Taking the tagline literally, Dean turns True Red into the undead protagonist of an animation in which the sneaker repeatedly changes shape, turning into forms including a bat, a castle and an oozing red substance.

An alumnus of Central St. Martin’s, London (BFA) and California Institute of the Arts (MFA), Dean participated in the Whitney Museum of American Art: Independent Study Program in 2013 and is a 2014-16 Core Artist in Residence at the Museum of Fine Art, Houston. *Focus: Danielle Dean* is organized by Amanda Hunt, Assistant Curator.

### ***Harlem Postcards Fall/Winter 2015–16***

*Harlem Postcards* is an ongoing project that invites contemporary artists to create postcards that evoke the cultural ferment, political vitality, visual stimulation and artistic inspiration of Harlem. Presenting perspectives on Harlem that are both intimate and dynamic, the images reflect the idiosyncratic visions of contemporary artists from a wide range of backgrounds and locations. Each postcard is produced as a limited edition that the Studio Museum makes available for free to visitors. This season, the Studio Museum is pleased to feature postcard images by **Ava Hassinger, Kia Labeija, Zanele Muholi and Jessica Vaughn**. *Harlem Postcards Fall/Winter 2015–16* is organized by Hallie Ringle, Senior Curatorial Assistant.

## ***Lorraine O'Grady: Art Is...***

In response to ongoing public enthusiasm, the Studio Museum has extended its presentation of *Lorraine O'Grady: Art Is...* through March 6, 2016. Organized by Amanda Hunt, Assistant Curator, the exhibition presents all forty photographs that resulted from Lorraine O'Grady's performance piece of the same title, in which she entered her own float in the 1983 African-American Day Parade and rode up Harlem's Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard with fifteen collaborators dressed in white. Displayed on top of the float was an enormous, ornate gilded frame, while the words "Art Is..." were emblazoned on the float's decorative skirt. At various points along the route, O'Grady and her collaborators jumped off the float and held up empty, gilded picture frames, inviting people to pose in them. The joyful responses turned parade onlookers into participants, affirmed the readiness of Harlem's residents to see themselves as works of art and created an irreplaceable record of the people and places of Harlem some thirty years ago. *Lorraine O'Grady: Art Is...* is organized by Amanda Hunt, Assistant Curator.

## ***Off-Site and Upcoming Exhibitions***

*People, Places and Things: Selections from the Studio Museum*

Sugar Hill Children's Museum of Art & Storytelling, October 3, 2015 to summer 2016

*Rodney McMillian: Views of Main Street*

*Ebony G. Patterson*

The Studio Museum in Harlem, March 24 to June 26, 2016

*Alma Thomas*

The Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery at Skidmore College, February 6 to June 15, 2016

The Studio Museum in Harlem, July 14 to October 30, 2016

## ***About The Studio Museum in Harlem***

Founded in 1968 by a diverse group of artists, community activists and philanthropists, The Studio Museum in Harlem is internationally known for its catalytic role in promoting the work of outstanding artists of African descent. Now approaching its 50th anniversary, the Studio Museum is preparing to construct a new home at its current location on Manhattan's West 125th Street, designed by internationally renowned architect David Adjaye as the first building created expressly for the institution's program. The new building will enable the Studio Museum to better serve a growing and diverse audience, provide additional educational opportunities for people of all ages, expand its program of world-renowned exhibitions, effectively display its singular collection and strengthen its trailblazing *Artist-in-Residence* program.

The *Artist-in-Residence* program was one of the institution's founding initiatives and is the reason why "Studio" is in the name. The program has supported more than one hundred emerging artists of African or Latino descent, many of whom who have gone on to highly regarded careers. Alumni



include Chakaia Booker, David Hammons, Kerry James Marshall, Julie Mehretu, Wangechi Mutu, Mickalene Thomas and Kehinde Wiley.

The collection includes over two thousand paintings, sculptures, works on paper, prints, photographs, mixed-media works and installations dating from the nineteenth century to the present. Artists represented include Romare Bearden, Robert Colescott, Jacob Lawrence, Norman Lewis, Chris Ofili, Betye Saar, Lorna Simpson, Kara Walker and Hale Woodruff, as well as many former artists in residence. The Studio Museum is the custodian of an extensive archive of the work of photographer James VanDerZee, the renowned chronicler of the Harlem community from 1906 to 1983.

The Studio Museum's exhibitions expand the personal, public and academic understanding of modern and contemporary work by artists of African descent. A wide variety of on- and off-site programs brings art alive for audiences of all ages—from toddlers to seniors—while serving as a bridge between artists of African descent and a broad and diverse public. A leader in scholarship about artists of African descent, the Studio Museum publishes Studio magazine twice a year and creates award-winning books, exhibition catalogues and brochures.

### ***Hours and Admission***

The Studio Museum is open Thursday and Friday, noon–9pm; Saturday, 10am–6pm; and Sunday, noon–6pm. The museum is closed to the public but available for school and group tours on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. Museum admission is by suggested donation: \$7 for adults, \$3 for students (with valid ID) and seniors. Free for children 12 and under. Sundays are free at the Studio Museum, thanks to generous support from Target. For more information visit [studiomuseum.org](http://studiomuseum.org).

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