NEW YORK, NY, April 5, 2017 — Thelma Golden, Director and Chief Curator of The Studio Museum in Harlem, today announced a roster of six wide-ranging new exhibitions and projects to be presented in the museum’s spring season, beginning April 20, 2017.

The Studio Museum will present three exhibitions highlighting the ways in which figurative art can both reflect and address African-American history and culture. The major survey exhibition Regarding the Figure explores more than a century of portraiture and figurative work, much of it drawn from the Museum’s permanent collection. Rico Gatson: Icons 2007–2017 presents a selection from Gatson’s ongoing series depicting renowned African Americans; while Jamel Shabazz: Crossing 125th includes portraits taken on the neighborhood’s iconic main street.

These exhibitions are accompanied by two presentations of archival materials. Signature: Graphic Design from the Studio Museum Archive explores fifty years of the institution’s history through the lens of printed material; while Smokehouse, 1968–1970 highlights the Smokehouse Associates, who sought to transform Harlem through public art projects. The latest installation of the popular Harlem Postcards project rounds out the season.
Thelma Golden said, “We’re delighted to welcome the public to this new mix of visually rich and intellectually engaging exhibitions and projects, which draw on the extraordinary depth of our permanent collection, and on the vital connections that we have forged over the years with the Harlem community and artists of African descent around the world. This season opens a window onto issues of continuing public import and artistic concern—revealing fascinating aspects of the Studio Museum’s past and present, while looking ahead toward our future.”

**Regarding the Figure** (on view through August 6, 2017) presents works from The Studio Museum in Harlem’s permanent collection that explore the practice of portraiture and figuration as a means of celebrating personal and collective histories, ideas, and identities. Ranging in date from the late nineteenth century to the present, and representing some forty artists from Henry Ossawa Tanner (1859–1937) to Njideka Akunyili Crosby (b. 1983), the works present diverse and at times unexpected methods of figuration, from the traditional to the experimental, and show subjects who come from the realms of both the celebrated and the anonymous. More than fifty paintings, drawings, photographs, works on paper and sculptures attest to the power that can come from representing the black body and the responsibilities that may attend these representations. **Regarding the Figure** is organized by the curatorial team of Eric Booker, Connie H. Choi, Hallie Ringle and Doris Zhao.

**Rico Gatson: Icons 2007–2017** (on view through August 27, 2017) presents a selection of the artist’s works on paper featuring renowned figures of African-American history and culture, sourced from well-known photographs. By juxtaposing these found photographs with hard-edge geometric lines in a palette featuring red, black, and green—implying Pan-Africanism—Gatson evokes the foundational importance to black consciousness of the people who are depicted, while also emphasizing the cultural, social and political implications of color and pattern. **Rico Gatson: Icons 2007–2017** is organized by Hallie Ringle, Assistant Curator.

**Jamel Shabazz: Crossing 125th** (on view through August 27, 2017) is a selection of images by the acclaimed Brooklyn-born street photographer, who has been documenting African-American life since the 1980s. Spanning twenty-five years of work in the heart of Harlem, the exhibition captures Shabazz’s love for this thriving community, showing the joy, self-determination, and complexities of black life along 125th Street. **Jamel Shabazz: Crossing 125th** is organized by Eric Booker, Exhibition Coordinator.
Signature: Graphic Design from the Studio Museum Archive (on view through July 2, 2017) delves into almost fifty years’ worth of catalogues, posters, newsletters, brochures and other printed matter produced by The Studio Museum in Harlem. While charting a history of the Studio Museum and the values it has represented to its visitors and stakeholders, these materials also cast light on shifting trends in graphic design and the visual representation of artists, people of African descent and the Harlem community. With a title that refers to both an assertion of self and a unit of printing, Signature reveals how graphic design can both present and shape an institution’s identity. Signature: Graphic Design from the Studio Museum Archive is organized by Elizabeth Gwinn, Communications Director, with archival assistance from Dessane Cassell, Studio Museum / MoMA Curatorial Fellow.

Smokehouse, 1968–1970 (on view through August 27, 2017) presents archival images of the work of the Smokehouse Associates, artists who developed community-oriented public art projects in Harlem aimed at transforming space through vibrant, geometric abstract murals, and sculptures. Photographs by Robert Colton, a Smokehouse Associate, depict the collective’s original members, William T. Williams, Melvin Edwards, Guy Ciarcia, and Billy Rose, at work in Harlem, often alongside local teenagers and elders. Smokehouse, 1968–1970 is organized by Eric Booker, Exhibition Coordinator.

Harlem Postcards Spring 2017 (on view through July 16, 2017) is the latest installment in an ongoing project that invites contemporary artists of diverse backgrounds to reflect on Harlem as a site of cultural activity, political vitality, visual stimuli, artistic contemplation and creative production. Each selected artist makes an image that the Studio Museum reproduces as a limited-edition postcard, which is made available for free to visitors. This season, the Studio Museum is pleased to feature postcard images by American Artist, Phoebe Collings-James, Azikiwe Mohammed and Mary Simpson. Harlem Postcards Spring 2017 is organized by Doris Zhao, Curatorial Assistant.

Also on View

Excerpt (ongoing; on view through July 2, 2017) explores how artists challenge conventional histories by manipulating the principal medium through which received ideas are conveyed: printed texts. Comprising language-based works by fifteen artists—artists’ books, photographs, prints, works on paper and multimedia pieces—selected primarily from the Studio Museum’s unparalleled collection, Excerpt is organized by Adeze Wilford, Studio Museum / MoMA Curatorial Fellow.
**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.

**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 fiftieth 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.

**Support**

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