



**MEDIA RELEASE**

The Studio Museum in Harlem  
144 West 125th Street  
New York, NY 10027  
studiomuseum.org/press

**Contact:**

Elizabeth Gwinn  
The Studio Museum in Harlem  
egwinn@studiomuseum.org  
646.214.2142

Kate Lydecker  
Polskin Arts and Communications Counselors  
kate.lydecker@finnpartners.com  
212.715.1602

**VIEWS OF MAIN STREET, THE FIRST MAJOR NEW YORK SOLO MUSEUM EXHIBITION BY RODNEY MCMILLIAN, LEADS THE SPRING 2016 EXHIBITIONS ROSTER AT THE STUDIO MUSEUM IN HARLEM**

**New Projects by Ebony G. Patterson and Rashaad Newsome, Thematic Installations from the Permanent Collection and the Latest Presentations in the Harlem Postcards Series Round Out the Spring Season**



**Rodney McMillian, *Untitled*, 2009.** Courtesy Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles. Photo: John Kenanrd

**New York, NY, December 16, 2015**—A major solo exhibition by the Los Angeles-based artist Rodney McMillian—his first in a New York City museum—will fill the main gallery of The Studio Museum in Harlem when the spring exhibition season begins on March 24, 2016. Joining *Rodney McMillian: Views of Main Street*, and remaining on view with it through June 26, will be new projects by Ebony G. Patterson and Rashaad Newsome, a pair of thematic installations from the unparalleled permanent collection and the latest presentation in the exhibition series *Harlem Postcards*.

Thelma Golden, Director and Chief Curator of the Studio Museum, said, “This spring’s exhibitions offer insights from three vital artists with burgeoning reputations who are doing exceptionally inventive and multifaceted work at mid-career. We are proud to welcome them to their first solo exhibitions at The Studio Museum in Harlem. We are also delighted to frame these new and recent works with presentations that bring out critical aspects of our superb and growing permanent collection.”

## Rodney McMillian: Views of Main Street

For more than a decade, Rodney McMillian has been exploring the domain of home as part of a larger examination of the intersection of race, class, gender and socioeconomic policy. *Rodney McMillian: Views of Main Street* is the first exhibition to reveal the full trajectory of this major aspect of the artist's complex and varied practice in painting, sculpture, video and performance. Organized by guest curator Naima J. Keith, Deputy Director of Exhibitions and Programs at the California African American Museum, Los Angeles, in close collaboration with the artist, the exhibition brings together more than twenty key works made from 2003 to the present that use symbols of domesticity to scrutinize the political and economic biases within the myth of a universal, middle-class "Main Street."



Rodney McMillian, *Couch*, 2012. Courtesy the artist and Maccarone, New York

In works such as *Couch...* (2012)—a sateen sofa sawed in half and then cemented back together—McMillian uses post-consumer objects including discarded mattresses, carpets, chairs and bedsheets as both the material and the subject matter of his art, as he evokes the physical, psychological and economic distress of communities hit by loan defaults, home foreclosures and unemployment. McMillian juxtaposes these sculptures with works such as *Untitled (The Supreme Court Painting)* (2004-06) that challenge the terms that government and the media use to discuss justice, democracy and the rights of citizens in their private space, especially as these political ideals are experienced by African Americans.

"As the title suggests, I hope this exhibition will bring out the complexities of the conversations that happen on different Main Streets, with their disparities of race, class and economics," Rodney McMillian said. "Perhaps more important, I hope to question what 'Main Street' means. When I've heard that expression, I have never believed it referred to me or other African Americans, regardless of our economic station."

Rodney McMillian (b. 1969, Columbia, SC) received his MFA from the California Institute of the Arts in 2002. He is also an alumnus of the Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. His work has been featured in past exhibitions at the Studio Museum, including *When the Stars Begin to Fall* (2014), *The Bearden Project* (2012), *Philosophy of Time Travel* (2007) and *Frequency* (2005). His works are in the collections of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Orange County Museum of Art; Museum Abteiberg, Mönchengladbach, Germany; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; and The Studio Museum in Harlem.

While *Rodney McMillian: Views of Main Street* is on view at the Studio Museum, the Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, will present the exhibition *Rodney McMillian: The Black Show* (February 3–August 14, 2016).



Rodney McMillian, *Untitled (The Supreme Court Painting)*, 2004-2006. Courtesy Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects

Accompanying both exhibitions will be a full-color scholarly publication titled *Rodney McMillian*, co-edited by Naima J. Keith and Anthony Elms, Chief Curator at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia. In addition to its contributions by Keith and Elms, the book will feature newly commissioned essays and responses by leading figures including Charles Gaines, artist; Rita Gonzalez, Curator of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Dave McKenzie, artist; and Steven Nelson, Professor of African and African American Art History, University of California, Los Angeles. Thelma Golden will offer the introduction and Amy Sadao, Director of the ICA Philadelphia, will provide the foreword.

**Rashaad Newsome: THIS IS WHAT I WANT TO SEE**



Rashaad Newsome, *ICON* (video still, detail), 2014. Courtesy the artist

An artist best known for his videos, performances and installations, which draw upon influences as varied as African history, European heraldry and aspects of African-American LGBTQ culture such as voguing and “throwing shade,” Rashaad Newsome will present his first Studio Museum solo exhibition, which will include video and works on paper in the spring season.

Rashaad Newsome’s work has previously been featured at the Studio Museum in *The Bearden Project* (2012), as well as being shown in group exhibitions including the *2010 Whitney Biennial*, the *2010 Greater New York at MoMA PS1*, *It’s Time to Dance Now* (2012) at Centre Pompidou in Paris, *Stage Presence: Theatricality in Art and Media* (2012) at SFMOMA and *Killer Heels* (2014) at the Brooklyn Museum.

Newsome (b. 1979, New Orleans, LA) received his BFA from Tulane University in 2001 and subsequently studied film at Film/Video Arts, Inc. in New York. His work is represented in the collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art, SFMOMA and the Brooklyn Museum.

*Rashaad Newsome: THIS IS WHAT I WANT TO SEE* is organized by Amanda Hunt, Assistant Curator.

**Ebony G. Patterson: ... when they grow up ...**

During the spring exhibition season, the project space at the Studio Museum will feature a new site-specific, mixed media installation by Ebony G. Patterson on the subject of violence committed against young people of color (including deadly police actions) and the fears that focus on these same young people, who in the eyes of too many people appear as threats rather than victims. In the artist’s words, “These children are often described as adults. Their blackness overrules the presumption of innocence.”

*Ebony G. Patterson: ... when they grow up ...* will present images of black youth in hand-embellished, large-scale, photo-based wall works, juxtaposed with a variety of elements associated with childhood and race. The installation will be designed so that visitors will negotiate the space as if experiencing it from a child’s height. “I am hoping to create a moment of beauty, ‘sainthood,’ and humanity,” Patterson states, “and to call into question



Ebony G. Patterson, *Untitled (Girl)* (detail), 2016. Courtesy the artist and Monique Meloche Gallery



the stereotypes that are projected about black youth.

This will be the first solo exhibition at the Studio Museum by Ebony G. Patterson (b. 1981, Kingston, Jamaica). Her work was previously included in the group exhibition *Caribbean: Crossroads of the World* (2012). Patterson currently divides her time between Kingston, Jamaica and Lexington, Kentucky.

*Ebony G. Patterson: ... when they grow up ...* is organized by Lauren Haynes, Associate Curator, Permanent Collection.

### ***Palatable: Food and Contemporary Art***

Presented in the Studio Museum's lower level gallery, *Palatable: Food and Contemporary Art* will examine how contemporary artists use food as a means to address issues of politics, memory, heritage, race and culture. Even within self-identified communities, variations in diet and cuisine act as markers of difference. Featuring works by artists who are all of African descent but have lived in various countries, *Palatable* engages, celebrates and critiques the differences in the ways people represent themselves through food. The works, which are drawn from the Studio Museum's permanent collection, range from re-creations of foodstuffs to representations of sites such as farms, grocery stores and restaurants.

*Palatable: Food and Contemporary Art* is organized by Hallie Ringle, Senior Curatorial Assistant.

### ***Surface Area: Selections from the Permanent Collection***

Artists and critics have long explored different ways to think about the surface of an artwork, from making it seem to dissolve into a perspectival illusion to emphasizing its physical presence as a flat plane. *Surface Area* presents a selection of works from the permanent collection that show how artists have explored new forms of materiality in their treatment of surface, challenging the ways in which viewers understand and engage with a work. Some artists, such as Titus Kaphar and Cullen Washington Jr., use the surface as an object in itself, which forms an active part of the composition, whereas others, such as David Hammons, make the surface into a space of interaction, where the history of an object or a body leaves its trace. Recognizing the crucial role of materiality in affecting the viewer, the exhibition peels back the multiple layers of surface as concept, metaphor and physical fact.

*Surface Area: Selections from the Permanent Collection* is organized by Doris Zhao, Curatorial Fellow.

### ***Harlem Postcards Spring 2016***

The spring season will also include the latest editions of Harlem Postcards, the popular ongoing project in which the Studio Museum invites artists to create images of Harlem that are then reproduced as postcards and made available for free in the gallery. This season, the Studio Museum is pleased to feature postcard images by **Marina Adams**, **Chester Higgins Jr.**, **Catherine Opie**, and **Trokon Nagbe**.

### ***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.

*Exhibitions at The Studio Museum in Harlem are made possible thanks to support from the following government agencies: The New York City Council; The New York City Department of Cultural Affairs; and New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency. Additional support is generously provided by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.*

### **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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