

STUDIO
MUSEUM
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in HARLEM

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**New initiatives
exploring dynamic
ways to work in
our community**

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The Studio Museum in Harlem reaches beyond its walls, inaugurates a series of artistic projects and partnerships in its community

***inHarlem* Initiatives Begin in Summer 2016 in Partnership with NYC Parks and The New York Public Library**

NEW YORK, NY, June 24, 2016 — Thelma Golden, Director and Chief Curator of The Studio Museum in Harlem, today announced the launch of *inHarlem*, a set of new initiatives designed to explore dynamic ways to work in the community and take the institution beyond its walls. The *inHarlem* initiatives will encompass a wide range of artistic and programmatic ventures, from site-specific artists' projects to collaborative presentations with civic and cultural partners in the Harlem neighborhood.

The first artists' projects will be specially commissioned sculptural works by artists Kevin Beasley, Simone Leigh, Kori Newkirk and Rudy Shepherd, to be realized in Morningside Park, Marcus Garvey Park, St. Nicholas Park and Jackie Robinson Park, respectively. The installations in these four iconic and Historic Harlem Parks will be on view from August 25, 2016, to July 25, 2017, and are organized by Amanda Hunt, Assistant Curator at The Studio Museum in Harlem, in partnership with NYC Parks and Historic Harlem Parks, along with the Marcus Garvey Park Alliance.

An exciting new chapter in the Studio Museum's nearly fifty-year history of dynamic arts programming, *inHarlem* is an expanded way of thinking about the Museum's relationship to its surrounding community.

Programmatic *inHarlem* collaborations will also launch in summer 2016, with the New York Public Library (NYPL) as an inaugural lead partner. The Studio Museum and NYPL will co-present literature- and family-related programs at the Library's George Bruce branch in Harlem, including *Books, Authors &*

Kids—an art-making, storytelling and book signing series for families—and *Studio Salon*, a series of talks, book clubs and writing workshops for adults. The first *Books, Authors & Kids* program at the George Bruce Library will take place on June 30, featuring poet and musician Kathy Z. Price, while *Studio Salon* at the George Bruce Library will launch in fall 2016. Programmatic partnerships are organized at the Studio Museum by Shanta Lawson, Education Director, and Nico Wheadon, Director, Public Programs & Community Engagement.

An exciting new chapter in the Studio Museum's nearly fifty-year history of dynamic arts programming, *inHarlem* is an expanded way of thinking about the Museum's relationship to its surrounding community. In the coming months, The Studio Museum in Harlem will announce additional *inHarlem* initiatives—including artists' projects, public programs and educational activities—with diverse partners throughout the neighborhood.

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Thelma Golden says, “The concept for this set of initiatives has been developed in answer to the question: What can, and should, The Studio Museum in Harlem be as we look toward our fiftieth anniversary? Our answer, *inHarlem*, will enable us to continue our work and strengthen our relationships with our neighborhood through artists' projects, collaborations with a range of fellow Harlem institutions, and initiatives to keep our collection more accessible than ever. We hope that *inHarlem* will engage our audiences more deeply than ever and are grateful to our partners and the four participating artists for getting *inHarlem* off to an outstanding start.”

“New York City's parks are the heart and soul of its neighborhoods—they are nature preserves, playgrounds, cultural sites and gathering places, all in one, and each park is a work of art in itself,” says NYC Parks Commissioner Mitchell J. Silver, FAICP. “That's why we are so proud to collaborate with The Studio Museum in Harlem and the Marcus Garvey Park Alliance to inaugurate the *inHarlem* initiatives in four of Harlem's magnificent parks. St. Nicholas Park in particular is one of our Community Parks Initiative sites that will undergo a major redesign thanks to generous Mayoral funding and community engagement, a hallmark of the program. These projects by distinguished

artists are going to fit beautifully into the landscape of the parks and make them even more vibrant and engaging for their communities.”

Junelle Carter-Bowman, Library Manager at the George Bruce Library, states, "For over a century the George Bruce branch of The New York Public Library has been an important resource for the young people of Harlem, offering story-times, after-school programs and opportunities for learning, education and fun! Today, we continue our tradition of service through this exciting partnership with The Studio Museum in Harlem, providing the neighborhood with innovative programs that develop the minds of our children and creative workshops that strengthen their passion and heart."

inHarlem: Kevin Beasley, Simone Leigh, Kori Newkirk, Rudy Shepherd

Each of the four commissioned installations that inaugurate *inHarlem* responds to a site in one of the neighborhood’s beloved parks. Kevin Beasley, Simone Leigh, Kori Newkirk and Rudy Shepherd will bring their distinctive visions to the project as they animate the parks in new ways that are accessible to Harlem residents and visitors alike. Each artist has considered Harlem’s rich history through his or her personal experiences and connections, including past work with the Studio Museum. The projects will encompass a variety of approaches to the meaning and execution of public sculpture. *inHarlem: Kevin Beasley, Simone Leigh, Kori Newkirk, Rudy Shepherd* will be accompanied by a range of education and public programs on-site, at the Museum and throughout the neighborhood over the course of a year.

inHarlem: Kevin Beasley will feature *Who’s Afraid to Listen to Red, Black and Green?*, which will transform a section of Morningside Park into a stage. Beasley will install a trio of large-scale sculptures he refers to as “acoustic mirrors,” incorporating his signature found materials. Each sculpture will feature one of the colors of the African-American flag in the form of found red, black, or green clothing, and housedresses sourced from a dress shop in East Harlem cast in resin. The acoustic mirrors will enable a variety of planned performances and encourage impromptu use by members of the Harlem community. *Who’s Afraid to Listen to Red, Black and Green?* reflects the artist’s complementary interests in sculpture, sound and community-building, and will create a unique space for both contemplation and conversation.

inHarlem: Simone Leigh synthesizes the multimedia artist’s recent forays into the public realm with her longstanding interest in African and African-American

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material culture and female identity. The installation, *A particularly elaborate imba yokubikira, or kitchen house, stands locked up while its owners live in diaspora*, will insert three structures, reminiscent of *imba yokubikira* (kitchen houses) from Shona-speaking rural areas of Zimbabwe, into the landscape of Marcus Garvey Park. Approximating the scale and outer texture of the round, clay-and-thatch *imba*, the structures will be arranged in a cluster to suggest a community; however, all will be without entrances, to both celebrate a diaspora and evoke the displacement it involves.

For *inHarlem: Kori Newkirk*, the artist will transform one of the iconic sets of steps in St. Nicholas Park into the site of a ceremonial procession. *Sentra* will frame the steps rising from St. Nicholas Avenue with reflective fringe curtains. Formally similar to the artist's well-known beaded curtains, and reflecting a landscape reminiscent of the pastoral imagery they sometimes depict, the dazzling canopy will be visible to, and welcome, passersby on St. Nicholas Avenue. Public sculpture is a new direction for Newkirk, though his diverse practice frequently incorporates unusual or found materials, often those associated with urban black life.

inHarlem: Rudy Shepherd will bring to Jackie Robinson Park the most recent of the artist's series of sculptures created to dispel people's feelings of racial prejudice, violence or ordinary disdain by opening them to more compassionate aspects of their personalities. Created from wood, metal and colored concrete at larger-than-human scale, *Black Rock Negative Energy Absorber* will be inaugurated with a ceremony featuring the artist and musical collaborators Brian Alfred, Elia Einhorn and Christof Knoche. Both the performance and the sculpture are intended to generate positive energy and dialogue in a rapidly changing neighborhood.

Studio Museum curator Amanda Hunt says, "Working with this group of artists, all of whom feel strong connections to the Harlem neighborhood and the Studio Museum, has been energizing. It's a great privilege to be able to work with the City to bring the work of the Museum into the community we treasure, and to site art in places with such wonderful, complex histories."

About the Artists

Kevin Beasley (born 1985, Lynchburg, Virginia; lives and works in New York, New York) received his BFA in painting and sculpture from the College for Creative Studies, Detroit and his MFA in sculpture from Yale. A past artist in residence at The Studio Museum in Harlem (2013–14) and at MoMA PS1

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(2014–15), he has presented his work in group exhibitions at institutions including the Museum of Modern Art, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, Whitney Biennial, Queens Museum of Art, Institute of Contemporary Art Boston, Museum of New Art (Pontiac, Michigan) and Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland.

Simone Leigh (born 1968, Chicago, Illinois; lives and works in Brooklyn, New York) received her BA in art and philosophy from Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana, and was a 2010–11 artist in residence at The Studio Museum in Harlem. Her work has been shown in solo exhibitions at the New Museum, The Kitchen and the Hammer Museum, and in group exhibitions at institutions including the Whitney Biennial, MoMA PS 1, Walker Art Center, Museum of the African Diaspora, the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Fowler Museum at UCLA and Kunsthalle Wien. She is a Creative Capital grantee and the recipient of the 2013 Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Biennial Award, a 2016 Herb Alpert Award in the Arts and a 2016 John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship.

Kori Newkirk (born 1970, The Bronx, New York; lives and works in Los Angeles, California) received his BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and his MFA from the University of California, Irvine. His work was the subject of a ten-year retrospective at The Studio Museum in Harlem, *Kori Newkirk: 1997–2007*. He has also received solo exhibitions at LA×ART and the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego. Group exhibitions include the 2006 Whitney Biennial, DAK'ART (the Dakar Biennial, Senegal, 2006) and the traveling exhibition *Uncertain States of America (2005–06)*. His work is in the collections of the Hammer Museum, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles, Art Institute of Chicago, Henry Art Gallery (Seattle) and Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

Rudy Shepherd (born 1975, Baltimore, Maryland; lives and works in New York, New York, and State College, Pennsylvania) received a BS in biology and studio art from Wake Forest University and an MFA in sculpture from the School of Art Institute of Chicago. His work has been shown in exhibitions at institutions including MoMA PS1, Bronx Museum of Art, Institute of Contemporary Art Boston, Socrates Sculpture Park, Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art and Regina Miller Gallery of Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh. His work was recently seen in the Studio Museum exhibitions *When the Stars Begin to Fall: Imagination and the American South (2014)* and *Black: Color, Material, Concept (2015)*.

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.

The *Artist-in-Residence* program is one of the institution's founding initiatives and 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 more than 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. The Studio Museum is open Thursday and Friday, noon–9 pm; Saturday, 10 am–6 pm; and Sunday, noon–6 pm. 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

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(with valid ID) and seniors, and is free for children twelve and under. Sundays are free at the Studio Museum, thanks to generous support from Target. For more information visit studiomuseum.org.

About The New York Public Library

The New York Public Library is a free provider of education and information for the people of New York and beyond. With ninety-three locations—including research and branch libraries—throughout the Bronx, Manhattan and Staten Island, the Library offers free materials, computer access, classes, exhibitions, programming and more to everyone from toddlers to scholars, and has seen record numbers of attendance and circulation in recent years. The New York Public Library serves more than 17 million patrons who come through its doors annually and millions more around the globe who use its resources at nypl.org. To offer this wide array of free programming, The New York Public Library relies on both public and private funding. Learn more about how to support the Library at nypl.org/support.

About NYC Parks

NYC Parks's *Art in the Parks* program has consistently fostered the creation and installation of temporary public art in parks throughout the five boroughs. Since 1967, collaborations with arts organizations and artists have produced hundreds of public art projects in New York City parks. For more information visit nyc.gov/parks/art.

About the Marcus Garvey Parks Alliance

The Marcus Garvey Park Alliance was formed in 2000 with a mission to make the park a safe and inviting place for community residents. Working with NYC Parks and community partners the Alliance has improved playgrounds, green spaces and restored the Richard Rodgers Amphitheater. The Alliance has evolved over the years into a community advocacy organization and the mission has expanded beyond the borders of Marcus Garvey Park.

Support

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