

JACK SHAINMAN GALLERY

CARRIE MAE WEEMS

October 29—December 10, 2016

Opening reception for the exhibition: **Saturday, October 29th, 2-4pm** at 513 West 20th Street and 524 West 24th Street.

Jack Shainman Gallery is pleased to announce **Carrie Mae Weems'** first solo exhibition in New York City since the historic retrospective at the Guggenheim in 2014. Her influential career continues to address the rifts caused by race, class, and gender via imagery and text that is both sharply direct and beautifully poetic. This two-part exhibition highlights her recent investigations into performance, entertainment, and history.

Blue Notes (2014) highlights figures on the periphery, bringing them front and center. The photographic series is paired with the enigmatic video installation *Lincoln, Lonnie, and Me* (2012), originally commissioned by the Mattress Factory, Pittsburgh, PA. The work rests on a 19th century optical trick, "Pepper's ghost," in which a strategically lit pane of glass reflects people and objects as dematerialized versions on stage. Weems employs this phantasmagoria to examine her own relationship to history and two individuals in particular: the 16th president of the United States and artist/activist Lonnie Graham, her sometime collaborator. Here history becomes theater, a succession of ghostly projections that draw us in to the strange ways in which representation seduces and manipulates, and how some are left out of history altogether, their apparitions left to haunt the expanses of Western culture.

The theme of performance continues with *Scenes & Take* (2016). Weems dons her black-robed muse persona—recognizable from the now iconic *Roaming and Museums* series—to stand before empty stage sets, documenting these encounters with vivid color photographs. The contemplative pose of the artist raises issues of who gets to be shown on screen; what do the fictional characters in television, theater, cinema, and visual art say about the cultural climate in which they are created, and how do these representations shift across time?

All the Boys (2016) responds to the recent killings of young African American men and suggests a darker reality of identity construction. Portraits of black men in hooded sweatshirts are matched with text panels. The written descriptions evoke police reports, underscoring how a demographic is all-too-often targeted and presumed guilty by a system plagued with prejudice.

Taken as a whole, the exhibition demonstrates that visual representation is ultimately performance: a tightly composed, laborious narrative. It takes serious work to unravel and refocus the greater dialogue toward inclusivity and acceptance. To look closely—past the bright lights, illusions, and constructions—is the first, crucial step.

Weems has participated in numerous solo and group exhibitions at major national and international museums including The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Frist Center for Visual Art, Nashville; The Cleveland Museum of Art; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Prospect.3 New Orleans; The Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; and the Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo in Seville, Spain. A solo exhibition, *Carrie Mae Weems: I once knew a girl...*, is currently on view through January 7, 2017 at the Ethelbert Cooper Gallery of African & African American Art at Harvard University. Her work is also part of *Southern Accent: Seeking the American South in Contemporary Art* at Nasher Museum of Art, Duke University through January 8, 2017.

Weems has received a multitude of awards, grants, and fellowships including Anderson Ranch Arts Center's National Artist Award; The Art of Change Ford Foundation Fellowship; the W.E.B. Du Bois Medal; the MacArthur "Genius" grant; US Department of State's Medals of Arts; Anonymous Was A Woman Award; Joseph H. Hazen Rome Prize Fellowship from the American Academy in Rome; The Herb Alpert Award in the Arts; the National Endowment of the Arts; and the Louis Comfort Tiffany Award, among many others.

She is represented in public and private collections around the world, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Tate Modern, London; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; National Gallery of Canada; and Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles.

Upcoming exhibitions include **Titus Kaphar** opening December 16th at both Chelsea locations. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 10am to 6pm. For additional information and photographic material please contact the gallery at info@jackshainman.com.