



PUBLIC SERVICE

Landscape of Lost Histories
Kevin Claiborne
05.05.2023—02.06.2023

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WHERE IS BLACK ENOUGH, WHERE CAN BLACKNESS REACH, WHEN IS BLACK ENOUGH, WAS BLACKNESS FIRST, and other unanswered, unpunctuated queries rest under the repeated image of an unidentified Black child. Part of the artist's latest series, *Lost Boys*, the child's enigmatic and inscrutable gaze adds an element of mystery, illegibility, and depth to the works inviting viewers to consider the ways and locations in which Blackness has existed in society, from the foundation of civilization to the present day, in spaces of both invisibility and hypervisibility. Conceptually, the series delves into notions of lost innocence, identity, and the challenges faced by Black youth in navigating the complexities of society. The repeated image of the unidentified Black male child carries a symbolic weight, representing not only the individual, but also a broader collective experience. The anonymity of the child allows viewers to project their own perceptions, emotions, and narratives onto the figure, fostering a connection and empathy with the shared human experience.

The *Lost Boys* series invites contemplation on the profound impact of societal forces on the lives of Black children, exploring themes of marginalization, systemic racism, and the struggle for recognition and belonging. It raises questions about the ways in which society may fail to protect and nurture the innocence and potential of these young individuals. Aesthetically, the repeated faces, methodically applied with acrylic and ink through the silkscreen process, creates a visual rhythm and impact, drawing attention to the significance and urgency of the subject matter. The deliberate repetition serves to emphasize the prevalence of the experiences depicted and the interconnectedness of these individual lost stories. The choice of medium allows for repetition, while leaving space for each *Lost Boy* to remain unique, contributing to the overall aesthetic quality, evoking emotional resonance and capturing the vulnerability and resilience of the unidentified boys.

The exhibition showcases work across several mediums, including silkscreen, paintings, collages, and new works from the artist's *Unconformity* series. The *Unconformities* are black abstract paintings made with materials from the earth, referencing that which has been lost or erased within the artist's own family history, due to historical erasure and dislocation, inspired by the geological phenomenon known as *The Great Unconformity* - a gap in the Earth's sediment hundreds of millions of years long. Working in several mediums is central to the artist's practice, creating a visual language that is as multifaceted and complex as the themes addressed in the work. The artist is interested in using fragments, piecing together mediums, aesthetic approaches, and visual content, which then allows for the exploration of fragmented histories, by joining together elements from the past to shed light on the present. It enables the artist to examine the complexities of Black identity, incorporating elements of cultural memory, social commentary, and personal storytelling. Through collage and the interplay of different mediums, the artwork can evoke a sense of hybridity, transcending traditional boundaries and questioning fixed notions of Blackness.

Our understanding of the world and our identities is shaped by the stories we tell. Our ability to share our stories is shaped by having access to our history and the privilege of preserving it. In this presentation of works, Claiborne offers the idea of Blackness as an evolving landscape of lost histories. Blackness is a vast and boundless landscape, shaped by the forces of time, with mountains of progress and valleys of despair, a place where the past and present intersect, and the future is still being written.



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Kevin Claiborne (b. 1989) is a multidisciplinary conceptual artist whose work examines intersections of identity, social environment, & mental health within the Black American experience. Moving between collage, silkscreen, photography, painting, and sculpture, while frequently using language as material, Claiborne is interested in finding new ways to look at history and its connection to the present.

Claiborne holds a B.S. in Mathematics from North Carolina Central University (2012), an M.S. in Higher Education from Syracuse University (2016), and an MFA in Visual Arts from Columbia University (2021).

In addition to numerous group exhibition, The artist's work has been featured in solo exhibitions at Sean Horton (Presents), New York, 2023; Sobering Galerie, Paris, 2022; OSMOS, New York, 2022; the Print Center, Philadelphia, 2021, and Thierry Goldberg, New York, 2020.

He has been featured in Artforum, The New York Times, foam, Bloomberg Business Week, The Atlantic, and Atmos; among others. Claiborne's work is included in the collection of The Whitney Museum of American Art (New York) and Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts Museum (Philadelphia), in addition to numerous private collections in the US and Europe.

Claiborne is currently living and working in Harlem, New York City.

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Kevin Claiborne

Born 1989, Washington, DC
Lives and works in New York, NY

EDUCATION

- 2021 MFA, Visual Arts, School of Visual Arts, Columbia University, New York, NY
- 2016 MS, Higher Education Administration, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY
- 2012 BS, Mathematics, North Carolina Central University, Durham, NC

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2023 *Landscape of Lost Histories*, Public Service Gallery, Stockholm, Sweden
Family Business, Sean Horton (Presents), New York, NY
- 2022 *Understand me*, OSMOS, New York, NY
Fragmentation, Sobering Galerie, Paris, France
Artist in Residence Exhibition, OSMOS Station, Stamford, NY
- 2021 *Before I Died I Was Invisible*, The Print Center, Philadelphia, PA
- 2020 *BLACK ENOUGH*, Thierry Goldberg Gallery, New York, NY
- 2019 *Double Consciousness 2*, UCSB Multicultural Gallery, Santa Barbara, CA
- 2018 *A Prescription for Double Consciousness*, SB CAST, Santa Barbara, CA
Walking on Water While Black, Sirena Gallery, Santa Barbara, CA

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2023 *Crusading the Specter*, Yossi Milo, New York, NY (upcoming)
Impulse of An Era, Albertz Benda, New York, NY
- 2022 *TORRENTS: Roots of a Future*, Cultural DC, Washington, DC
SAVIGNANO IMMAGINI, SI Fest, Forlì-Cesena, Italy
Arrangements in Black, Phillips, New York, NY
To Knead a Knot, Lower East Side Printshop, New York, NY
PRESENT POWER/ FUTURE HOPES, The Clemente Center, New York, NY
Tempus Fugit, Latchkey Gallery, New York, NY
back & write, OSMOS Gallery, New York, NY
- 2021 *Hereditary*, Swivel Gallery, New York, NY
Vocoder, The Macy Art Gallery, New York, NY
Time Won't Tell, Project Gallery V, New York, NY
The Meeting Point, Regular Normal Gallery, New York, NY
Mrs. Robinson, The Fireplace Project, East Hampton, NY
Varsity Blues, Allouche Gallery, New York, NY
MONOCHROME, Bull Farm 1856, Rock Tavern, NY
Let Freedom Ring Vol. 2, Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM), New York, NY
- 2020 *Nature Technology II*, The Canvas, New York, NY
BLACKNESS IS, Photoville, New York, NY
Once More, With Feeling, UCLA New Wight Biennial, Los Angeles, CA
Ways & Means, Skelf, United Kingdom

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- 2020 *In Oscillations*, SITE Projects London, UK
How We Hear Now: Sound, Language, & Environment, California College of the Arts
Architectural Ecologies Lab, San Francisco, CA
The Brightest Midnight, The Pandemic Archive, New York, NY
BABY MOMA, At Peace Gallery, New York, NY
- 2019 *Sisyphian Justice*, The Arts Fund, Santa Barbara, CA

COLLECTIONS

Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts Museum, Philadelphia, PA
Whitney Museum of American Art Special Collections, New York, NY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Carroll, Angela N. *Lucid Distortion*, Exhibition Essay, Sean Horton (Presents), March 2023.
- Carroll, Angela N. *GLYPHS: The Image + Text Issue* Foam Magazine #60, November, 2021.
- Cascone, Sarah. *Editors' Picks: 16 Events for Your Art Calendar This Week* Artnet News, September 21, 2020.
- Deng, Audrey. Interview with Kevin Claiborne. *Conversations with Artists in Art Getting Art: Kevin Claiborne II* Columbia University School of the Arts, January 22, 2020.
- Donelan, Charles. *'Sisyphian Justice' at the Arts Fund* Santa Barbara Independent, February 12, 2019.
- Dozer, Ayanna. *"The New Generation of Black Artists Boldly Redefining Conceptual Art"* Artsy.com, September 1, 2022.
- Espinoza, Joshua. *ARTNOIR and the Meatpacking District to Launch Black Cultural Festival* Complex Mag, August 11th, 2021.
- Glasgow, Abigail. *ArtNoir Reclaims the Black History of New York's Meatpacking District* Cultured Mag, August 27th, 2021.
- Mitter, Siddhartha. *Photoville Adds New Venues, Vistas and Vision* The New York Times, September 21, 2020.
- Rabinowitz, Cay-Sophie. *Kevin Claiborne* OSMOS Magazine Issue 22, April 2022.
- ArtNoir. *Virtual Visits* ArtNoir, April 14, 2022.
- Sharif, Najma. *5 Photographers On Documenting Protests Through Their Own Lens* Atmos, July 9, 2020.
- Tarmy, James. *'Are Your Lungs Worth More?' An Artist Captures the Protests in New York* Bloomberg Businessweek, June 9, 2020.
- ... *MFA Spotlight*, Artforum, 2021.
- ... *8 Curators, Artists, and Art Historians on the Most Consequential News Images Since the Death of George Floyd* Artnet News, June 19, 2020.
- ... Worthless Studios. *Free Film: 2020 Addition, Subtraction, Multiplication, Division*, June 2020.

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PUBLICATIONS

“The Myth of the Silent Majority” *The Atlantic*, September, 2020.
“A Unique and Powerful Document of the Global Black Lives Matter Protests” *AnOther Magazine*, August 26, 2020.
“Reckoning with a Reckoning: One Year Since George Floyd’s Murder” *New York Magazine*, May 24, 2021.
“Art and Activism: Documenting Protests Against Police Brutality and Anti-Blackness” *Ilford Photo*, June 23, 2020.

HONORS & AWARDS

2022
2021 Keyholder Residency, Lower East Side Print Shop, New York, NY
2020 Finalist, Not a Monolith, ArtBridge & Facebook Open Arts
Finalist, Aperture Foundation & Baxter St. Camera Club Next Step Award
Grant Recipient, ArtNoir Jar of Love Grant
Finalist, Photolucida Critical Mass Awards
2019 Photography Fellowship, Columbia University School of the Arts
Visual Arts Scholarship, Columbia University School of the Arts (through 2021)

TEACHING & TALKS

2022
Adjunct Assistant Professor, Darkroom Photography I, Columbia University, New York, NY
2021
2020 Artist Talk, The Print Center, Philadelphia, PA
Visiting Artist Lecture, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM
Visiting Artist Lecture, The Cooper Union, New York, NY
Visiting Artist Lecture, Columbia University, New York, NY
2019 Teaching Assistant, Photo I, Columbia University, New York, NY
2018 Teaching Assistant, Photo II, Columbia University, New York, NY
Artist Talk, University of California Santa Barbara, CA



Kevin Claiborne
B. 1989

Untitled (Unconformity), 2023
Earth, rocks, dirt, grass, ink and paint on panel
40.5 x 30.5 cm



Kevin Claiborne
B. 1989

No Time to Wait for America, 2023
Collage on paper
30.5 x 22.9 cm



Kevin Claiborne
B. 1989

Spirit Spouse II (Divorce from Death), 2022
Screenprint on panel
121.2 x 91.3 cm



Kevin Claiborne
B. 1989

Untitled (Lost Boys), 2023
Acrylic and screenprint on canvas
45.5 x 35.5 cm



Kevin Claiborne
B. 1989

Roles & Statues, 2021
Oil stick and collage on wood panel
152 x 76.2 cm