

RENA BRANSTEN

GALLERY

Lewis Watts: Photographs

June 29 – August 17, 2019

Reception July 13 / 5-7pm

Rena Bransten Gallery is pleased to present our second solo exhibition with Bay Area photographer Lewis Watts. With a keen interest in both historical and contemporary representations of people in the African diaspora, this exhibition includes portraits of artists, activist, authors, and musicians along with his photographs of historical, archival objects.

An avid traveler with an acute interest in people, Watts collects images everywhere he goes. His subjects are usually aware of his presence, and his engagement with them is paramount to the work. Watts' photographs challenge the proliferation of negative images of black people propagated by news outlets, instead asserting a sense of "Black Joy," a reference to the Black Joy Parade where he has taken many of his portraits. Through this work, Lewis pays homage to an exhibit of photographs compiled by W.E.B. Du Bois at the 1900 Paris Exposition that sought to counteract prevailing racist caricatures. Like Frederick Douglass, Du Bois recognized the power of photography in shaping public opinion.

Included in this grouping are works which continue Watts' interest in the archive which began during a 2016 residency at The Amistad Center for Art and Culture in Hartford, CT. Watts' work aims to look at the history of representations of African Americans, the motivations of the authors of those representations, and the narratives they wish to assert.

Lewis Watts is a photographer, archivist/curator and Professor Emeritus of Art at UC Santa Cruz. He is the author of "Harlem of the West: The San Francisco Fillmore Jazz Era" (2017) and "New Orleans Suite: Music and Culture in Transition" (2013). His work has been exhibited at and is in the collections of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, CA; the UC Berkeley Art Museum, CA; he Cité de La Musique, Paris, France; the Ogden Museum of Southern Art, New Orleans, LA; the Oakland Museum of California; and the Amistad Center for Art and Culture, Hartford, CT, among others.

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Mural of Nelson Mandela, Johannesburg, 2016

Archival pigment print, ed. 2/10

Frame size: 48 1/2 x 37 inches

Paper size: 44 x 35 inches

Image size: 37 1/2 x 25 1/2 inches



Harlem, 2017

Archival pigment print, ed. 2/10

Frame size: 27 x 20 7/8 inches

Paper size: 22 x 17 inches

Image size: 19 1/2 x 13 inches



Erica Deeman in her Studio, 2018

Archival pigment print, ed. 2/10

Frame size: 27 x 20 7/8 inches

Paper size: 22 x 17 inches

Image size: 19 1/2 x 13 inches



Room with a View - Basquiat, Paris, 2014

Archival pigment print, ed. 3/10

Frame size: 48 1/2 x 37 inches

Paper size: 44 x 35 inches

Image size: 37 1/2 x 25 1/2 inches



Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Black Portraiture[s]

Conference, Boston, 2018

Archival pigment print, ed. 2/10

Frame size: 27 x 20 7/8 inches

Paper size: 22 x 17 inches

Image size: 19 1/2 x 13 inches

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Yaniya Lee, Black Portraiture[s] Conference, Boston, 2018

Archival pigment print, ed. 2/10

Frame size: 27 x 20 7/8 inches

Paper size: 22 x 17 inches

Image size: 19 1/2 x 13 inches



Black Portraiture[s] Conference, Florence, Italy, 2015

Archival pigment print, ed. 2/10

Frame size: 37 3/4 x 27 3/4 inches

Paper size: 36 x 24 inches

Image size: 29 3/4 x 19 3/4 inches



James Baldwin, back cover of "If Beale Street Could Talk," African American Library, Oakland, 2019

Archival pigment print, ed. 2/10

Frame size: 27 x 20 7/8 inches

Paper size: 22 x 17 inches

Image size: 19 1/2 x 13 inches



Christopher Birch, artist working on mural, San Francisco African American Art and Culture Complex, 2018

Archival pigment print, ed. 2/10

Frame size: 37 3/4 x 27 3/4 inches

Paper size: 36 x 24 inches

Image size: 29 3/4 x 19 3/4 inches



Adger Cowans, New York Photographer, Black Portraiture[s] Conference, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, 2018

Archival pigment print, ed. 2/10

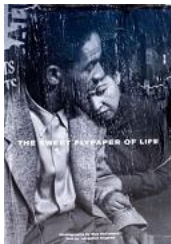
Frame size: 37 3/4 x 27 3/4 inches

Paper size: 36 x 24 inches

Image size: 29 3/4 x 19 3/4 inches

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*Poster for "The Sweet Flypaper of Life,"
Brooklyn, 2019*

Archival pigment print, ed. 2/10

Frame size: 27 x 20 7/8 inches

Paper size: 22 x 17 inches

Image size: 19 1/2 x 13 inches



Emory Douglas, Johannesburg, 2016

Archival pigment print, ed. 2/10

Frame size: 27 x 20 7/8 inches

Paper size: 22 x 17 inches

Image size: 19 1/2 x 13 inches