DAVID
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NONA FAUSTINE

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Nona Faustine's work focuses on history and representation by evoking a critical and emotional understanding of the past and proposing a deeper examination of contemporary racial and gender stereotypes. Her photographs, performances, and other works often explore the constitution of national identity and the ways in which loss and violence are obscured by dominant historical narratives. Recent solo exhibitions have taken place at Socrates Sculpture Park, Queens, New York (2020); Higher Pictures, New York (2019); Institute of Fine Art, New York (2016); and Smack Mellon, Brooklyn, New York (20160. Recent and forthcoming group exhibitions include Fantasy America, The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh (forthcoming, 2021); Statues Also Die*,* Real Art Ways, Hartford, Connecticut (2020); Outwin Boochever Competition*,* Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery, Washington, D.C. (2019); Perilous Bodies*,* Ford Foundation, New York (2019); Slavery In The Hands Of Harvard, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts (2019); Half The Picture: A Feminist Look At The Collection, Brooklyn Museum, New York (2018): Regarding The Figure, Studio Museum in Harlem, New York (2017); Power, Sprüth Magers Gallery, Los Angeles (2017); and i found god in myself: the 40th anniversary of Ntozake Shange's "for colored girls…, African American Museum of Philadelphia.

Images by Nona Faustine (b. Brooklyn, New York) have been published in a variety of national and international media outlets, including Artforum, The New York Times, Huffington Post, Hyperallergic, and The New Yorker, among others. In 2019 she was distinguished with the New York Foundation Arts Award in Photography, BRIC Colene Brown Art Prize, and Anonymous Was A Woman Award, and was a finalist in the National Portrait Gallery Outwin Boochever Competition. Her work is in the collections of the David C. Driskell Center at Maryland State University, College Park; Studio Museum in Harlem, New York; Brooklyn Museum, New York; North Dakota Museum of Art, Grand Forks;

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Weisman Art Museum, Minneapolis; and Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh. She lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.

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DAVID
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NONA FAUSTINE

Born, Brooklyn, NY
lives and works in Brooklyn, NY

EDUCATION

2013 M.F.A. International Center for Photography-Bard College New York, NY
2009 B.F.A. School of Visual Arts New York, NY

SELECTED SOLO PERFORMANCES AND EXHIBITIONS
(* Indicates a publication)

2020 Socrates Sculpture Park in Astoria, Queens, NY

2018 *Ye Are My Witness*, Higher Pictures, New York, NY

2017 *My Country*, Baxter St. Camera Club New York, NY

2016 *Mitochondria*, Institute of Fine Art, New York, NY
White Shoes, Smack Mellon, Brooklyn, NY

SELECTED GROUP PERFORMANCES AND EXHIBITIONS
(* Indicates a publication)

2021 *Fantasy America*, The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh, PA

2020 *Statues Also Die,* Real Art Ways, Hartford, CT
(Un)Making Monuments, Print Center, Philadelphia, PA
Monuments Now, Socrates Sculpture Park, Astoria, NY
Death Becomes Her, BRIC ART Brooklyn, NY

2019 *Shadowboxing,* Freedman Art, New York, NY
Outwinn Boochever Competiton, Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery, Washington, D.C.
Bodies of Work, Baxter St. Camera Club, New York, NY
Perilous Bodies, Ford Foundation, New York, NY

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Slavery In The Hands Of Harvard, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA
A World Of Statues, Foxy Productions, New York, NY
Building A House Without Walls, Cathedral of Saint Johns Divine, New York, NY

2018 *Representation, Reflection, Action to One in Three: Comparative Perspectives on Gender Violence*, Lesly University, Cambridge, MA
Half The Picture: A Feminist Look At The Collection, Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY
Historos Afro-Atlanticas, Instituto Tomie Ohtake, Sao Paulo, Brazil
Please Touch: Body Borders, Mana Contemporary, Jersey, NJ
Is Love Made Public, Galeria Arroyo De La Plata, Zatecas, Mexico
Refraction, Steven Kasher Gallery, New York, NY
Citizen An American Lyric, St. John University Gallery, Queens, NY

2017 *Hold These Truths, No Longer Empty*, Nathan Cummings Foundation, New York, NY
Mitochondria, Cooley Gallery, Reed College, Portland, OR
Let Me Be An Object That Screams, 400 Gallery, Lesly University, Chicago, IL
Discursive Selves, Westbeth Gallery, New York, NY
Regarding The Figure, Studio Museum of Harlem, Harlem, NY
The Female Gaze, Museum of Sex, New York, NY
Power, SPRÜTH MAGERS Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
ShiftIng African American Women Artists And The Power Of Their Gaze, University of Maryland, College Park, MD
Occupancies, Boston University, Boston, MA
The Body As A Battle Ground, William Paterson University, Wayne, NJ

2016 *I Found God In Myself: The 40th Anniversary of Ntozake Shange "For Colored Girls...*, African American Museumof Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA
The Christa Project: Manifesting Divine Bodies, Saint John's Divine Cathedral New York, NY
MAMI, Knockdown Center, Maspeth, NY
Race & Revolution, Governors Island, NY
I can't breathe, Art Gallery at the College of Staten Island, Staten Island, NY
Herstory, The Center For Arts & Culture At Bedford Stuyvesant Brooklyn, Brooklyn, NY
3 Graces, Space 776 Gallery, Brooklyn, NY
Constellation, Studio Museum of Harlem, Harlem, NY

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AWARDS AND RESIDENCIES

2020 Kehinde Wiley, Black Rock Residency, Dakar, Senegal

2019 Anonymous Was A Woman
Colene Brown Art Prize
NYSCA/NYFA Artist Fellowship for Photography
Finalist Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery Outwinn Boochever Competition

2017 Smack Mellon Residency Brooklyn, NY

2016 Baxter St, Camera Residency Club New York, NY (2016-2017)

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY
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2020 **The Photograph as Contemporary Art*, text by Charlotte Cotton, London: Thames & Hudson, 2020
**Just Us: An American Conversation,* by Claudia Rankine, Minneapolis: Gray Wolf Press, 2020, cover photography by Nona Faustine
**Call Your "mutha": A Deliberately Dirty-Minded Manifesto for the Earth Mother in the Anthropocene,* by Jane Caputi, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020
Steinhauer, Jillian, "Monuments That Celebrate Communal Struggle Not Flawed Men," *NYTimes.com*, September 17, 2020
Musawwir, Jennifer S., "Monuments Now: In Search of New Monuments," *DailyArtMagazine.com*, August 21, 2020

2019 *MAE PRETA*, Brazilian Anthology, 2019
Musée Magazine, 2019
"Faith Ringgold," Culture Magazine, April - May 2019

2018 **Afro-Atlantic Histories Catalog Volume 1*, São Paulo: MASP, 2018
MFON Women Photographers of The African Diaspora, 2018
Berger, Maurice, "Three Generations of Black Women in Family Photos", *NYTimes.com*, July 11, 2017

2017 Ollman, Leah, "Review: 'Power: Work by African American Women' delivers the voices of 37 artists in one fierce exhibition," *LATimes.com*, April 11, 2017

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Shakur, Fayemi, “Two New Shows That Celebrate Black Women Artists,” *NYTimes.com*, March 23, 2017

2016 Schwartz, Alexandra, “A Living Monument to the Ghosts of American Slavery,” *NewYorker.com*, December 28, 2016

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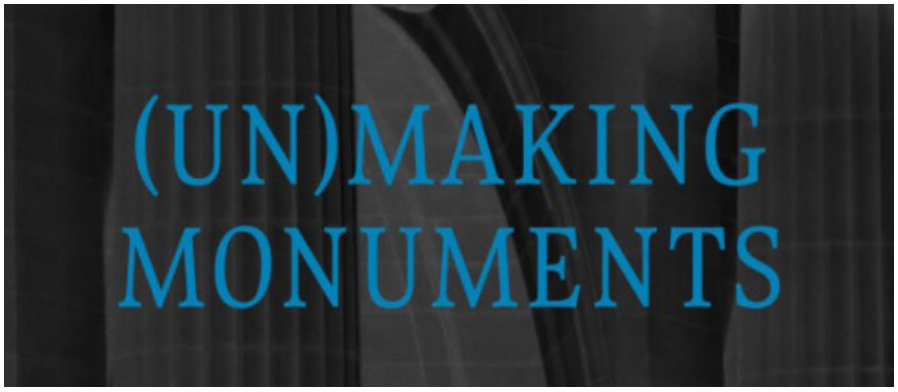
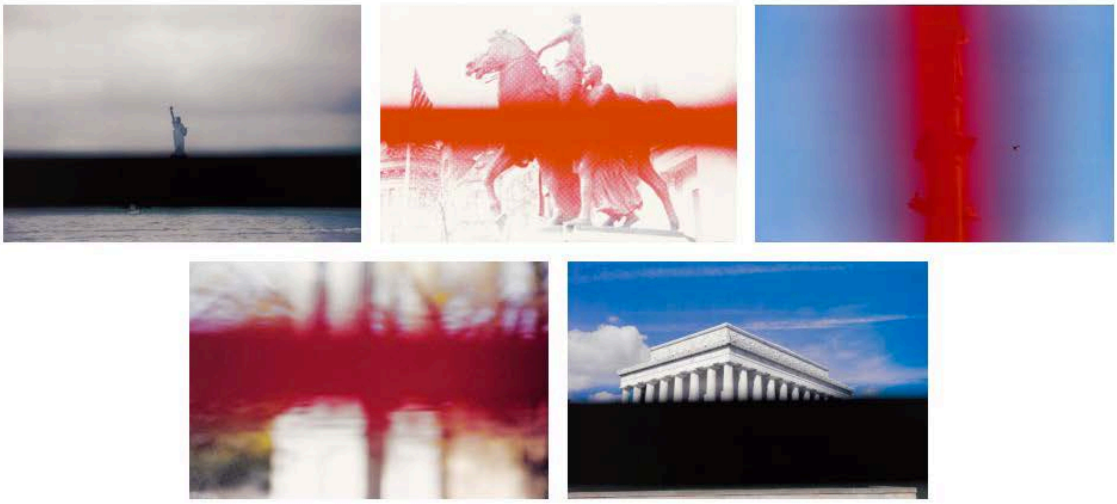


Nona Faustine



“My Country” is a series of eight photo-based screenprints by Nona Faustine, made in collaboration with the New York print studio Two Palms. Trained as a photographer, Faustine garnered attention for her 2015 series “White Shoes” in which she poses in the nude – except for a pair of white high-heeled shoes – at sites that were once centers of the slave trade in New York City. Often censored for its explicit content, this series established Faustine as an artist with both a critical eye and a critical message.

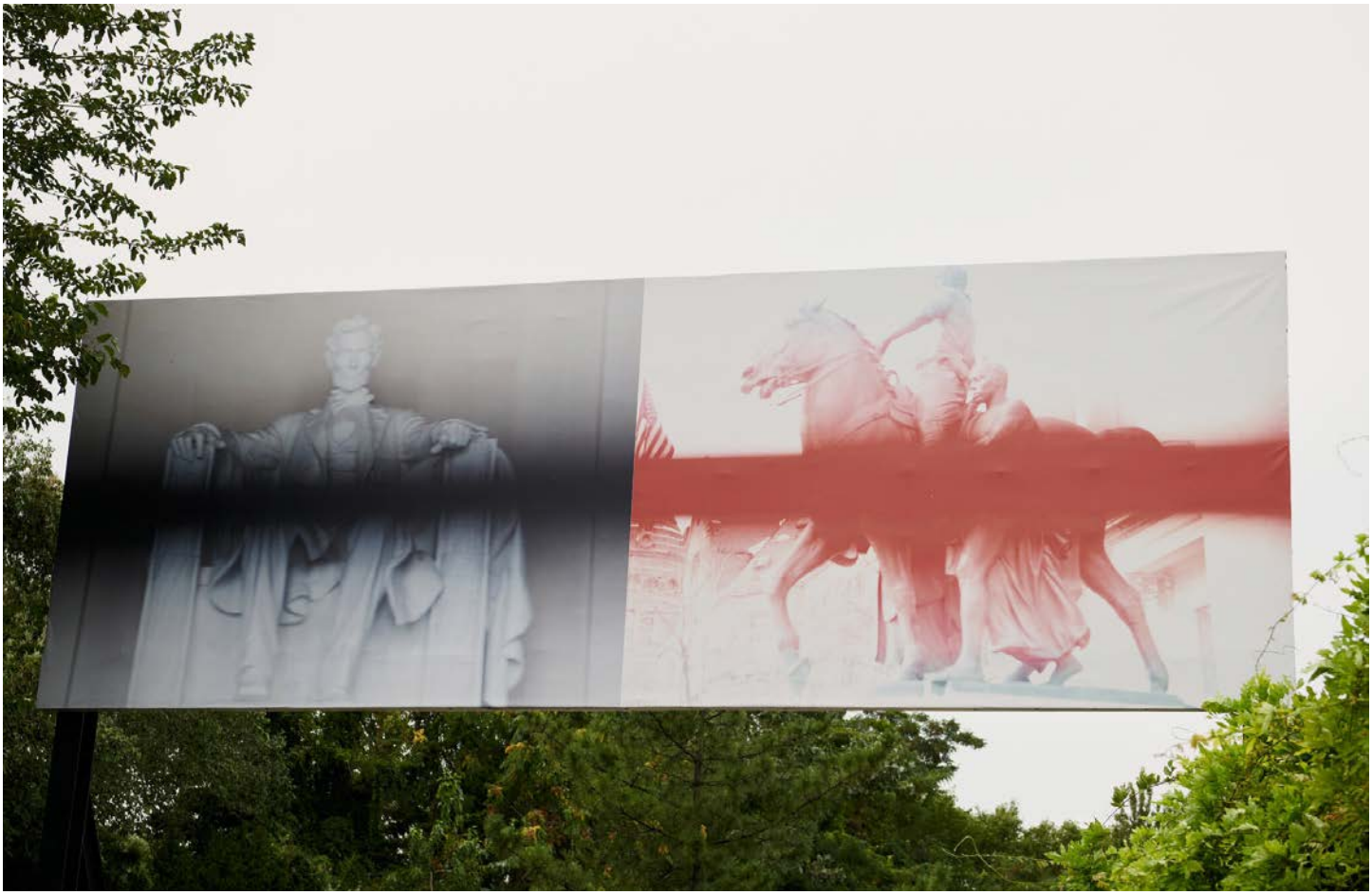
Faustine continues her interrogation of historic sites in “My Country,” which begins with a photograph of the Statue of Liberty. Taken not long before the 2016 U.S. presidential election, through a window on the Staten Island Ferry, it illustrates the myopia of the American monumental landscape. “That black line [from the window frame] shows the current of history that runs through these monuments that is not being acknowledged,” Faustine said in a 2019 interview with Mekala Rajagopal. The distortions in these works metaphorically represents the Black bodies glaringly absent from our monumental landscape.

Steinhauer, Jillian, “Monuments That Celebrate Communal Struggles, Not Flawed Men,” *NYTimes.com*, September 17, 2020

The New York Times

Monuments That Celebrate Communal Struggles, Not Flawed Men

Contemporary sculptures by Jeffrey Gibson and others, part of “Monuments Now” at Socrates Sculpture Park in Queens, draw on the past to look towards the future.



Nona Faustine’s “In Praise of Famous Men No More” (2020). The artist created photographic renderings of two monuments to American presidents to challenge their whitewashed legacies. Joe Carrotta for The New York Times

A striking billboard looms over the gates at the main entrance of Socrates Sculpture Park. It’s not an advertisement but an artwork by Nona Faustine that speaks to the reckoning that — fueled by a summer of protests — has led to the toppling of monuments across this country.

Titled “In Praise of Famous Men No More,” its soft-focus images show the Lincoln Memorial in Washington side by side with the equestrian statue of Theodore Roosevelt outside the American Museum of Natural History in New York City (which has long been considered a symbol of colonialism and racism and is in the process of being removed).

A hazy horizontal line runs across the middle of each photographic rendering, as if the sculptures were being crossed out or viewed from behind bars. The negation seems less individual than categorical. Both presidents are venerated for progressive policies, but in reality, their legacies are mixed. Ms. Faustine seems to be rejecting the traditional monument form for not making room for those complications. Enough, her billboard seems to say. Let us no longer spend our resources praising famous men.

The work is a perfect introduction to “Monuments Now,” a thought-provoking exhibition whose first phase is on view at this park in Long Island City, Queens. (The second and third parts, which will add works by 10 more artists and a group of high school students, open Oct. 10.)

Steinhauer, Jillian, "Monuments That Celebrate Communal Struggles, Not Flawed Men," *NYTimes.com*, September 17, 2020

Planned before the latest wave of falling statues, and curated by the park's director of exhibitions, Jess Wilcox, "Monuments Now" looks prescient today. It suggests possible answers to a question that haunts our public landscape: As stone and metal renderings of imperious men that once seemed permanently affixed to the ground have vanished, what should take their place?

Local governments have begun to respond by mostly commissioning new statues in the old figurative model. Some artists and art organizations are, thankfully, testing out more radical ideas. Foremost among them is Philadelphia's Monument Lab, whose founders, Paul Farber and Ken Lum, in a recent Artforum piece, proposed reimagining monuments "as a continuation" rather than an endpoint of history, "as the bridge between what happened and how time falls forward" and "a site of struggle, but also of possibility."

That could be a thesis statement for "Monuments Now," which spotlights the works of artists who, rather than planning for posterity, are cultivating a sense of open-ended possibility.

Just inside Socrates Sculpture Park is Paul Ramírez Jonas's "Eternal Flame" (2020). Five brightly colored picnic tables have been arrayed around a peculiar structure: a sand-colored chimney-cum-obelisk sitting atop a base with five fireplace-like openings, each containing a barbecue grill. This is the artist's homage to the communal and cultural importance of cooking, and a pun of sorts. Despite its unusualness, and the undoubted complexity involved in actually constructing it, the piece has an appealing simplicity.

The grills are functional and available for public use. With "Eternal Flame," Mr. Ramírez Jonas has rethought the traditional social dynamics of a monument. Instead of imposing a narrative on passers-by, the sculpture invites, even requires, activation by viewers. Its overarching statement is that cooking is a uniting force and a vital cultural constant — a truism of sorts that becomes beautifully specific and meaningful only when people bring their recipes and experiences to the table (or, in this case, grill). And by being displayed in Queens, the most ethnically diverse urban area in the world, the work also turns into a celebration of immigrant communities and of living together in difference.

If Mr. Ramírez Jonas creates a space for engaging collective, oral histories, Xaviera Simmons uses written texts to reflect on "a monumental form of systematic change," as one of her pieces says. Her contribution, titled "The structure the labor the foundation the escape the pause" (2020), comprises three distinct sculptures. The biggest looks as if it could be the screen at a drive-in movie theater, only what's playing isn't escapist entertainment. Instead viewers are confronted with written excerpts from Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman's Special Field Order No. 15 (issued in January 1865), which provided land to newly freed slaves. (It's partly the source for the promise of "40 acres and a mule.")

Hand-painted in thick, white, capital letters on a black background, the words are arranged in such tight formation that in order to read them, you have to slow down, concentrate, and sometimes sound them aloud. The same is true for the text in Ms. Simmons's second sculpture, which features passages about reparations for slavery.

Both works feel like direct challenges to the viewer — especially a white one like myself — who shirks the responsibility of helping to dismantle racism, whether because he or she finds it overwhelming or sees it as someone else's problem. By illuminating sources that clearly point the way forward, Ms. Simmons demonstrates that it's not a matter of innovating new solutions, but about the will and power to redistribute resources.

In contrast, the artist's third piece is abstract: an elegant, modernist-inspired interplay of geometric forms in black-painted metal. It seems out of place at first, recalling something you might whiz by in a traditional sculpture park. But placed in conversation with its companions, the work starts to resemble an oversize blank slate, its sloping central plane suggesting a scroll. What equitable future could we write if we spent more time studying the past?

A similar question is invoked by Jeffrey Gibson's "Because Once You Enter My House It Becomes Our House" (2020), the most monumental structure in the show thus far. Inspired by the earthen mounds of Cahokia, the largest and perhaps most important ancient city built by the North American Indigenous Mississippians (the remains are a UNESCO World Heritage Site in Collinsville, Ill.), Mr. Gibson has constructed a three-tiered ziggurat that measures 44 feet by 44 feet at the base and rises 21 feet high. It's an electrifying sight, papered with wheat-paste posters that seem to vibrate with psychedelic patterns.

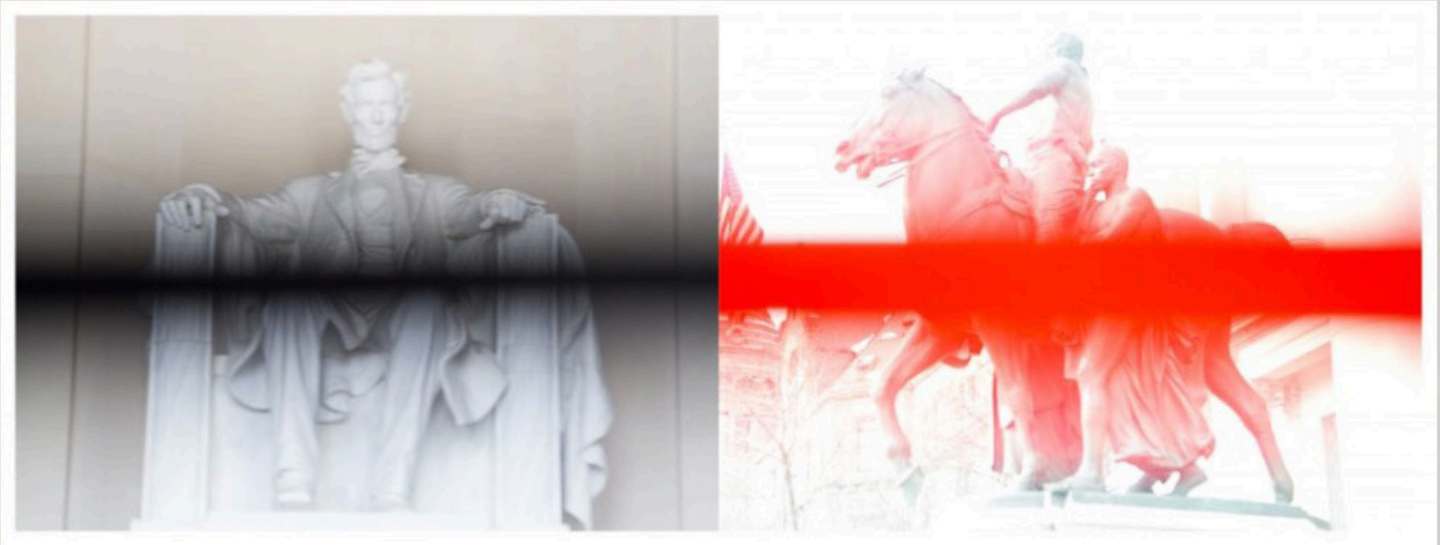
Those posters help spell out phrases that are broadcast from the sculpture's four sides: "In numbers too big to ignore," "Powerful because we are different," "The future is present," and "Respect Indigenous land." The last one resonates especially while looking across the East River to Manhattan, where the skyline offers an image of modern "progress" that Mr. Gibson's dramatic yet more humble form challenges. Who are the beneficiaries of such progress? Who is terrorized and killed to make way for it? The land occupied by Socrates Sculpture Park used to be the territory of the Canarsee band of the Lenape people. As far as I could tell, there is no marker or mention of that on the grounds.

Like Mr. Ramírez Jonas's work, Mr. Gibson's comes alive with interaction: He's curated a series of performances by Indigenous artists to take place on and around it. And like Ms. Simmons's work, Mr. Gibson's draws on the past to outline the possibilities of a more just future. There are no heroes in "Monuments Now," no canonization of individuals. Instead, there's a celebration of communities and the knowledge they hold within them.

On my visit, the posters covering Mr. Gibson's ziggurat had already begun to wrinkle and tear. Rather than detract from the piece, the imperfections added a layer of depth, evoking ephemeral street art, fading signs for glamorous parties, and the blunt reality of the changing climate. They offered a reminder of something traditional monuments would have us forget: nothing, not even a likeness in bronze, lasts forever.

SOCRATES SCULPTURE PARK

NONA FAUSTINE'S BROADWAY BILLBOARD ON VIEW



Beginning July 1, 2020, and in conjunction with the 'MONUMENTS NOW' exhibition, the Broadway Billboard above the Park's main entrance features artist Nona Faustine's 'In Praise of Famous Men No More.' 'In Praise of Famous Men No More' is a diptych of photographs depicting two 19th-century monuments to American presidents. Both images are bisected by a blurred horizontal line, interrupting the crisp focus of the classical realist monuments and destabilizing the narratives they portray.

One image centers the Lincoln Memorial – a towering depiction of the 16th president that was carved from Georgia white marble by Daniel Chester French and is located in the National Mall in Washington D.C..

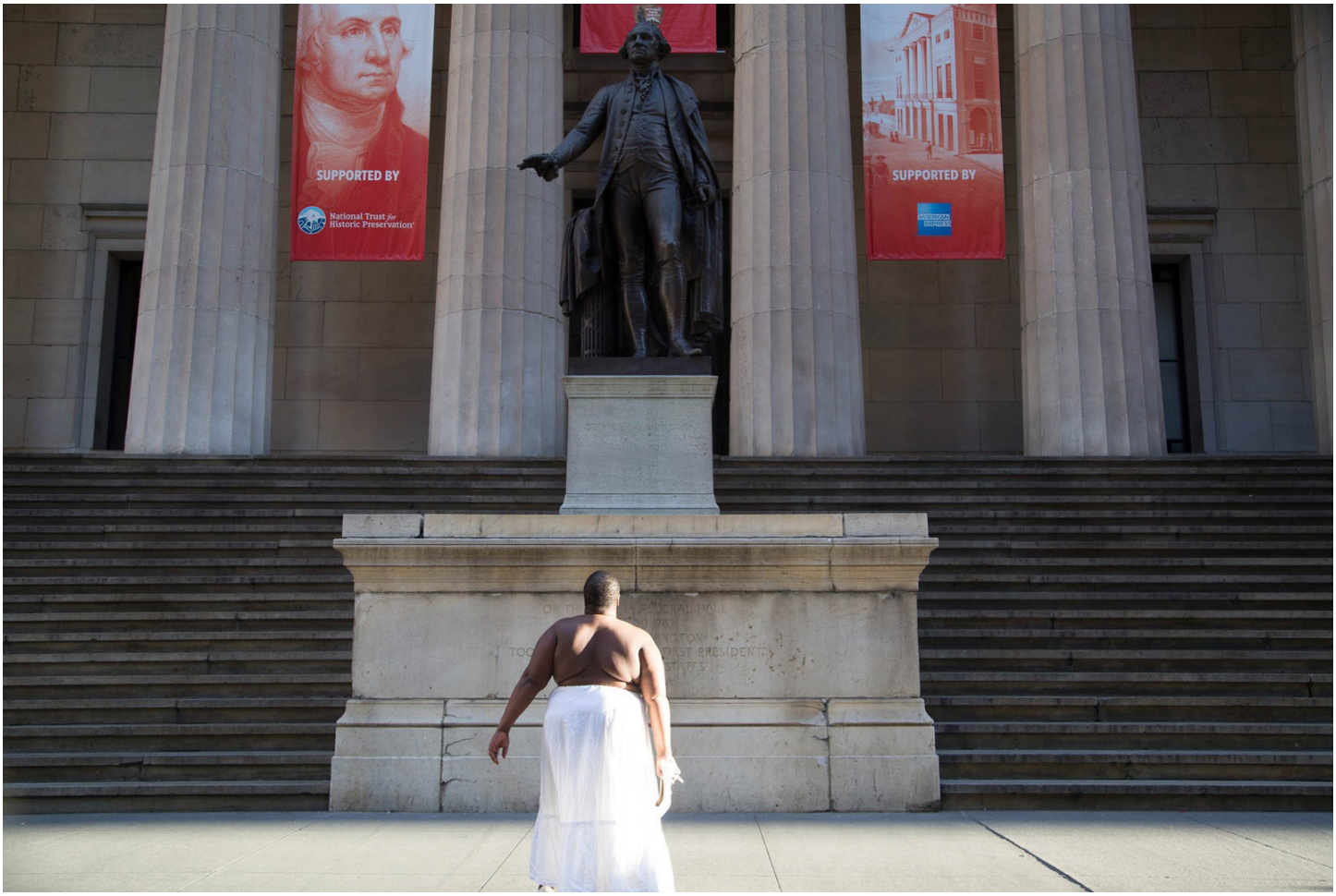
The other image presents a profile view of the bronze Equestrian Statue of Theodore Roosevelt in front of the Natural History Museum in New York City – which, as it was recently announced, will be removed in response to nation-wide protests challenging the presence of racist monuments in public space. The statue depicts the 26th president on horseback allegorically flanked by an Indigenous man and an African man.

This presentation is a continuation of the 'White Shoes' series in which Faustine photographed herself nude at historic sites pertaining to slavery in New York City – using her body as a temporary monument to explore contested histories and methods of remembering.

Schwartz, Alexandra, "A Living Monument to the Ghosts of American Slavery," *NewYorker.com,* December 28, 2016

THE NEW YORKER

A Living Monument to the Ghosts of American Slavery



Photograph by Nona Faustine " '. . . a thirst for compleat freedom … had been her only motive for absconding.' Oney Judge, Federal Hall NYC," 2016.

ney Judge ran away from George and Martha Washington one day in May, 1796, while the First Family was in Philadelphia, the nation's temporary capital. She was about twenty, enslaved since her birth at Mount Vernon—"a light mulatto girl, much freckled, with very black eyes and bushy hair," according to a runaway advertisement in a local paper, "of middle stature, slender, and delicately formed." Her father was a white indentured tailor, her mother a black seamstress, one of the nearly three hundred slaves Martha Washington had inherited after the death of her first husband. There had been "no suspicion of her going off, nor no provocation to do so," the ad stated, with an aggrieved note; Judge had been Martha's personal servant, and was a particular favorite of hers. But the Washingtons knew that slaves could claim their freedom after six months on Pennsylvania soil, and had been careful to deny theirs the chance by regularly taking them out of state. Judge had made her escape just before they planned to travel home to Virginia. She was found in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, where the customs collector interviewed her at Washington's behest. "A thirst for compleat freedom," he reported, "had been her only motive for absconding."

The photographer Nona Faustine has taken those words for the title of a picture in “My Country,” her solo show at Baxter Street at the Camera Club of New York through January 14th. In the image, Faustine stands in front of Manhattan’s Federal Hall Memorial, on Wall Street, gazing up at a bronze statue of Washington mounted high on a marble pedestal. She wears nothing but a white cotton skirt slip, exposing her naked back to the viewer. In her right hand she carries a pair of white low-heeled pumps, the kind a sensible bride might choose for her walk down the aisle. If you know the story of Oney Judge’s escape, and especially if you know what followed—how she volunteered to return to Virginia if Washington would promise to free her after he died; how Washington, affronted by her “unfaithfulness,” refused—you might see Faustine’s figure as a ghost of the nation’s past, come to hold our first President, and all our brutal history, to account. But Faustine isn’t a ghost, and she isn’t Oney Judge. She is broad, not slender; dark, not light; alive, not dead; a flesh-and-blood woman looking at America in all its tenses and challenging America to look right back at her where she stands, right in the center of the frame.

The Federal Hall picture is part of Faustine’s series “White Shoes,” which she began making in 2013. She had been thinking about enslaved women, she told me recently, women like Saartjie Baartman, known as the Hottentot Venus, and Delia, whose daguerreotype for a “scientific” racial study was taken on a South Carolina plantation in 1850 and used to devastating effect in Carrie Mae Weems’s installation “From Here I Saw What Happened and I Cried.” She was thinking, too, about black history in New York, and about the pressures that gentrification has put on the city’s communities of color. Faustine’s parents moved to New York from North Carolina in the sixties. She grew up in Brooklyn, and still lives in Flatbush with her mother, her sister, and her daughter. “I thought a lot about how one day we may not be here,” she said.

In “White Shoes,” Faustine uses herself as symbol and subject, posing at different places associated with slavery in New York’s past. The skirt slip is a recent addition, part of Faustine’s plan to slowly dress herself as she continues the series. In many of the images she is fully nude save for her footwear, standing still as a sculpture on a wooden block at the Wall Street intersection where the city’s slave auction was held, or throwing her weight against one of City Hall’s mammoth Doric columns as if trying to force the building to budge. The pictures give a paradoxical impression of terrible vulnerability—this, after all, is how enslaved women were displayed for sale—and courageous defiance, of the power that comes from baring one’s body without shame or coyness or fear, particularly when that body happens to be of a color and a shape so often slandered as threatening or unbeautiful. “I also wanted to celebrate the body,” Faustine said. “Bodies like mine, women of my color and my complexion.”

Faustine’s photos serve to mark the places that belong to a history too often hidden from view, whether by design, or neglect, or the ever-frenetic pace of change inherent to life in New York. In one, she stands in the bright sunlight at what looks to be an unremarkable M.T.A. bus depot in Harlem. Only the picture’s title, “Negro Burial Ground,” hints at the whole truth of the depot’s past. In another, she holds a placard printed with Sojourner Truth’s famous refrain, “Ar’n’t I a Woman,” on a narrow stretch of Canal Street. There’s no plaque to mark the spot where Truth used to live, at number seventy-four. In her most recent set of pictures, Faustine approaches American history from the opposite angle, photographing iconic national monuments like the Statue of Liberty and the Lincoln Memorial. The images are gorgeous, postcard-perfect, save for the black bars that partially obscure the frame.

Only one of the images in “My Country” was made indoors. “Say Her Name” is dedicated to the memory of black women, like Rekia Boyd and Korryn Gaines, who have died in encounters with the police. Faustine shot the picture in her family’s apartment. She lies naked and stiff as a corpse on a tabletop covered with the American flag while her mother, in the foreground, looks on. Her white shoes are still on her feet. Faustine told me that she had been inspired by the black Southern tradition of sitting vigil over the dead at home, “having those bodies back for one last time before they never see them again.” Making the picture had been an emotional experience for both women; Faustine preferred that it not be published, for fear of the personal threats that it might elicit. “When we leave the protection of our homes, we may never see our families again, as African-Americans in this tumultuous time,” she said. “Even in the quietness of shooting that picture, I thought of what it could be like for her in that actuality, of what could happen.”