

Press Release

apexart - nyc

Souls Grown Diaspora

Curated by **Sam Gordon**

Opening reception:

Friday, January 10, 6-8 PM

January 11 - March 7, 2020

291 Church Street, NYC



Frederick Weston, *Body Map (Arms)*, 2017

Featuring Work By:

Alvin Baltrop
Raynes Birkbeck
Stephanie Crawford
Curtis Cuffie
Otis Houston Jr.

Dapper Bruce Lafitte
Reverend Joyce McDonald
Sara Penn
Frederick Weston
Wesley Willis

Souls Grown Diaspora is an exhibition that explores a generation of leading contemporary visionary African-American artists from the wider United States, and situates their work into an art-historical lineage shaped by the Great Migration. The exhibition traces the migration: the movement spanning 1916 to 1970 in which six million African-Americans left the rural South for urban centers such as New York, Chicago, Detroit, and Oakland. *Souls Grown Diaspora* follows a new wave of artists, mostly self-taught, whose works address a range of revelatory social and political subjects.

The show's title takes its inspiration from Atlanta's Souls Grown Deep Foundation, which has worked for decades to change the canon of art history to include a group of pioneering African-American artists from the South—among them Thornton Dial, Lonnie Holley, Mary T. Smith, Hawkins Bolden, and the women's collective known as the Gee's Bend Quilters (Arlonzia Pettway, Annie Mae Young and Mary Lee Bendolph)—as essential to the understanding of developments in the history of American art. The name "Souls Grown Deep" originates from the last line of Langston Hughes' 1921 poem "The Negro Speaks of Rivers": "My soul has grown deep like the rivers." A collection of research material will be included in vitrines and a series of performances and talks will accompany the exhibition during its run.

Souls Grown Diaspora was selected through apexart's Open Call. For more information and images visit apexart.org/gordon.php or contact elizabeth.larison@apexart.org.

Sam Gordon is a New York-based artist and curator. In 2017 he and Jacob Robichaux founded Gordon Robichaux, a gallery and curatorial agency in New York City's Union Square. Recent curatorial projects include *The Frieze Library: Volume One*, Frieze, New York, 2019, and *Contemporary Drag*, NADA, New York 2017. Gordon's own painting, drawing, photography, and video work was regularly presented in numerous solo and group exhibitions at Feature Inc. from 1997 - 2013. His work is included in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art (New York, NY), the Walker Art Center (Minneapolis, MN), and the Tang Museum (Saratoga Springs, NY). In addition to his curatorial and artistic practice, Gordon has taught at the California Institute for the Arts, Rhode Island School of Design, and The University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

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#SoulsGrownDiaspora

291 church street, new york, ny 10013
t +1 212 431 5270 www.apexart.org