

FURTHERMORE



Blackness as Joy, Leisure, and Excellence

Green Family Art Foundation gets underway with
Black Bodies, White Spaces: Invisibility & Hypervisibility

BY TERRI PROVENCAL

Dallas art collectors Debbie and Eric Green, who began to collect art over 20 years ago, recently announced the inception of the Green Family Art Foundation, established to make endowments to museums for both the purchase of art as well as exhibitions, manage an art exhibition venue, and help support art educational opportunities. The Green collection includes over 300 works of art, and is notable for its prescient concentration of work by Black artists, LGBTQ artists, and female artists.

Adam Green, a New York City art advisor and consultant, as well as Debbie and Eric's son, consulted extensively with the foundation regarding the first exhibition and potential future shows. "When my family began collecting art, we focused on female artists, such as Dana Schutz and Nicole Eisenman, because we felt they were severely undervalued, yet incredibly talented and important. As the collection grew and evolved, women artists became the focus, and we became deeply supportive of many of these artists." Over the years, Green says, "We have since expanded our collection to concentrate on other underserved artists, including artists of color and LGBTQ artists." The foundation's exhibitions—the intention is three each year—will feature works from the Green collection as well as borrowed works and recent acquisitions purchased for shows.

Dallas Art Fair Projects, in the River Bend development on Manufacturing, will host the inaugural exhibition, *Black Bodies, White Spaces: Invisibility & Hypervisibility*, curated by London-based curator Aindrea Emelife. Of the impetus for the show Emelife states: "I wanted to establish a legacy of Black artists using their bodies to create art that celebrates the multiplicity of the Black experience and exposes the underbelly of how Blackness has been perceived then and now. We must see Blackness as joy, leisure, and

excellence, and do away with limited depictions of strife."

Correcting the historic invisibility of Black narratives, the show introduces the experience of hypervisibility as an act of resistance. Comprising 21 artists, *Black Bodies, White Spaces* includes major works by Robert H. Colescott, Barkley L. Hendricks, David Hammons, Toyin Ojih Odutola, Amy Sherald, Henry Taylor, Mickalene Thomas, as well as young artists broadening the conversation: Jordan Casteel, Jadé Fadojutimi, Jammie Holmes, and Dominic Chambers among others. "This exhibition is a battle cry and reminder that taking up space is resistance," enthuses Emelife.

Working closely with Emelife stateside, the foundation's curator, Clare Milliken, is assisting with exhibition management alongside registrar Bailey Summers. "As a team, we have produced an exhibition in which meaningful and impactful discourse can occur," Milliken says. "For example, I respond to the narratives of resilience and fortitude found in the contrasting figures of Deborah Roberts' isolated little girl jumping rope (*Moving Target*, 2018) and Amoako Boafo's dignified seated man (*Steve Mekoudja*, 2019), which correlate to one another by the use of solitary figures breaking the fourth wall to engage their onlookers."

Green is proud of his family's collection and is wholly committed to sharing it with the public. "What was once a personal collection has become a group of artworks that deserve to be shared with the broader community, much of which is due to the fact that we tirelessly pursued works by these artists." He emphasizes, "It is no coincidence that they are finally gaining overdue recognition from museums, galleries, and collectors. We hope with our foundation we can increase these important artists' exposure in DFW and beyond."

Black Bodies, White Spaces: Invisibility & Hypervisibility opens October 9 and runs through January 27, 2022. **P**

From left: Amoako Boafo, *Steve Mekoudja*, 2019, oil on canvas, 92.5 x 63 in. Collection of Danny First, Los Angeles, © Amoako Boafo, 2019. Courtesy of the artist and Roberts Projects, Los Angeles; Derek Fordjour, *Two Point Bend*, 2019, acrylic, charcoal, oil pastel, and foil on newspaper mounted on canvas, 40 x 60 in. Green Family Art Foundation © Derek Fordjour. Courtesy of the artist; Petzel Gallery, New York; David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles; Josh Lilley, London; Amy Sherald, *High Yella Masterpiece: We Ain't No Cotton Pickin' Negroes*, 2011, oil on canvas, 59 x 69 in. Green Family Art Foundation © Amy Sherald. Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth. Photograph by Ryan Stevenson; Deborah Roberts, *Moving Target*, 2018, mixed media and collage on paper, 67.5 x 48 in. Green Family Art Foundation, © Deborah Roberts. Courtesy the artist and Stephen Friedman Gallery, London. Photograph by Todora Photography.