

The PHOTOGRAPHERS Lecture Series
Moderator: Phillip S. Block
November 2, 2011

Xaviera Simmons

Xaviera Simmons is a New York City based multi-media artist. Her work encompasses photography, installation, performance, sculpture, video and audio. Many of Simmons' photographic pieces encapsulate a collective and personal history through the use of individuals in landscape settings (viewing both the individuals and landscapes as integral and mutually informative characters within the images). Simmons is currently working on multiple artistic developments, and is concluding a multi-year project where she took free portraits of people in an open air studio in New York City Streets (some individuals invited to bring items and apparel of personal meaning). This project culminates with an exhibition of images presented in conjunction with More Art at the Hudson Guild Galleries from February 9, 2012 through March 27, 2012.

Observations on natural and urban environments as they relate to social, political, personal and art histories set the stage for Simmons' photographs. Alluding to traditions of American landscape painting and depictions of the human presence within it, carefully chosen scenery is employed as a hybrid, multivalent character harboring complex immigrant and migrant histories, an agent affecting and affected by the figures that inhabit it. Sages and nomads pose and roam through archetypal locales as conduits for the "nebulous" and "nonlinear" narratives embedded in the ground, allowing entrance into, in the artist's terms, "other characters, narratives, and geographies." –Press Release from Xaviera Simmons: Wilderness, Nicole Klagsbrun Gallery

Xaviera Simmons lives and works in New York City, where she was born in 1974. Simmons received her BFA in Photography from Bard College in 2004. She was a part of the Whitney Independent Study Program in 2005, while simultaneously participating in a 2-Year Actor Training Conservatory at The Maggie Flanigan Studio. Simmons is the recipient of multiple awards, fellowships, and residencies. She is currently an Artist in Residence at the Studio Museum in Harlem, and Simmons was recently chosen along with 14 other artists and collaborative arts teams by the U.S. Department of State to be a part of the new smARTpower Initiative (which sends artists to other countries to bring people together and foster greater understanding). As a smARTpower diplomat, Simmons will travel and work in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Simmons has been a part of multiple solo and group shows throughout the United States and globally. Major exhibitions and performances include Nicole Klagsbrun Gallery, The Bronx Museum, and The Museum of Modern Art, New York (2011); MoMA PS1, New York, The Studio Museum In Harlem, The Nasher Museum at Duke University (2010); The Sculpture Center, New York (2009); The Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston (2008); Art in General, New York (2006). Simmons has an upcoming exhibition, *Salt 4: Xaviera Simmons*, showing from November 18, 2011 through February 26, 2012 at the Utah Museum of Fine Arts. You will find her works in the collections of The High Museum of Art, Deutsche Bank, The Museum of Contemporary Art, The Rubell Family Collection, The Studio Museum In Harlem, The Nasher Museum Of Art At Duke University, and The Agnes Gund Art Collection.

LMc