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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 15, 2016

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New Museum Artist-in-Residence Simone Leigh Presents “The Waiting Room”

June 22–September 18, 2016

Residency and Exhibition Include a New Installation, a Series of Care Sessions, and Public Programs That Expand Notions of Medicine

New York, NY...In her work, Simone Leigh (b. 1968, Chicago, IL) demands that the concerns, roles, and rights of women of color be recognized as central, rather than pushed to the margins. **Taking into account a history of social inequality that has necessitated community-organized care, traditionally provided by women**, “Simone Leigh: The Waiting Room” considers the possibilities of disobedience, desire, and self-determination as they manifest in resistance to an imposed state of deferral and debasement. Whereas patience, pragmatism, and austerity often underscore political debates surrounding the failures of public health care, Leigh finds inspiration in parallel histories of urgency, agency, and intervention embraced by social movements, black communities, and women. Focusing specifically on an expanded notion of medicine, **Leigh’s residency and exhibition at the New Museum reference a wide range of care environments and opportunities**—from herbalist apothecaries, to *muthi* [medicine] markets in Durban, South Africa, to meditation rooms, to movement studios—and involve a variety of workshops and healing treatments that she refers to as “care sessions.”

Continuing Leigh’s involvement with professionals in the field of holistic health that began with her 2014 Creative Time project “Free People’s Medical Clinic,” “The Waiting Room” features a new installation and a private, “underground” series of classes for community partners. Additionally, **a series of talks, performances, and events conceptualized as medicinal dialogues on aging, disobedience, abortion, healing, and toxicity will be offered over the course of the exhibition.** “The Waiting Room” suggests that creating a space for wellness may require both the making of a sanctuary and an act of disobedience against the systemic enactment and repudiation of black pain.

“The Waiting Room” inaugurates the Department of Education and Public Engagement’s annual **R&D Summers, a residency and exhibition program that will foreground the Museum’s year-round commitment to community partnerships and to public dialogue at the intersection of art and social justice.**

The exhibition is curated by Johanna Burton, Keith Haring Director and Curator of Education and Public Engagement; Shaun Leonardo, Manager of School, Youth, and Community Programs; and Emily Mello, Associate Director of Education; and is accompanied by a broadsheet designed by Nontsikelelo Mutiti.

CARE SESSIONS

All care sessions will be open to the public free of charge and will take place on the Fifth Floor. Space is limited, and admission will be available on a first-come, first-served basis. To attend a session, please register in the New Museum Lobby on the day of the event. Queries about care sessions and public programs can be directed to waitingroom@newmuseum.org.

Afrocentering with Aimee Meredith Cox

Saturdays: June 25, July 23, August 6, August 27, September 17, 11:30 AM–12:30 PM

Thursdays: July 14, July 28, August 18, August 25, 7–8:30 PM

Afrocentering is a movement philosophy created by Aimee Meredith Cox that focuses on mind–body connection and self-awareness. In this series of events, Cox will lead participants through movements that incorporate Katherine Dunham–inspired dance, yoga, and Pilates.

Massage with Malik K. Bellamy

Sundays: June 26, July 3, July 24, August 7, September 4, September 18, 1–4 PM

Led by Malik K. Bellamy, these twenty-minute massage sessions will consist of compression, tapotement, and a hand-and-foot massage incorporating gentle stretching. The goal of these sessions is to stimulate circulation and increase range of motion, preparing you for the rest of your day.

Community Acupuncture with Julia Bennett

Thursdays: July 7, August 11, September 8, 6–9 PM

Saturdays: July 16, August 13, September 10, 4–6 PM

Community acupuncture is a growing approach to providing accessible, cost-effective treatment to groups of people in a soothing, shared environment. Participants will be separated by folding screens for privacy and treated together for twenty-minute acupuncture sessions.

Learning How to Heal Yourself with Plants: Herbalism Workshops with Karen Rose

Saturdays: July 9, July 16, July 23, July 30, August 6, August 13, 2–3 PM

For this in-depth course, Karen Rose will draw from over fifteen years of experience as a community, clinical, and formulary master herbalist, and will focus on how women may live inspired lives using the energies of plants.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Please visit newmuseum.org for further information, including ticket prices, for the following public programs.

Rashida Bumbray: Motherless Child Set

Thursday June 23, 5–7 PM

Fifth Floor

Curator and choreographer Rashida Bumbray and guests will perform a cycle of black folk songs to celebrate the opening of “Simone Leigh: The Waiting Room.”

Chitra Ganesh: On Disobedience

Thursday June 30, 7 PM

New Museum Theater

Artist Chitra Ganesh will present a lecture exploring the notion of disobedience as it has been mobilized in political protest and social movements outside of the United States.

Karen Rose: Learning How to Heal Yourself with Plants: Herbalism Gallery Talk

Thursday July 21, 7 PM

Fifth Floor

A specialist in Eastern and Western herbal medicine, Karen Rose will discuss how the energies of plants can be harnessed to improve well-being.

María Magdalena Campos-Pons: Remedios: Performance Rituals as Healing

Saturday July 23, 3 PM

New Museum Theater

Artist María Magdalena Campos-Pons will negotiate narratives of pain, loss, and resilience through a performative meditation on survival.

Lorraine O'Grady: Ask Me Anything About Aging

Thursday August 4, 7 PM

New Museum Theater

Fielding questions about aging, artist Lorraine O'Grady will consider the benefits of intergenerational word-of-mouth information and strategy-sharing among women.

On Abortion: A Conversation

Thursday September 1, 7 PM

Sky Room

Simone Leigh will organize an event addressing historic and contemporary narratives surrounding the reproductive health and rights of black women through dialogue with invited guests.

Vanessa Agard-Jones: On Toxicity

Saturday September 10, 3 PM

New Museum Theater

Anthropologist Vanessa Agard-Jones will discuss her forthcoming book, *Body Burdens: Toxic Endurance and Decolonial Desire in the French Atlantic*, which considers pesticides, sexual politics, and postcoloniality in Martinique.

UNDERGROUND PARTNERSHIPS

The Waiting Room Underground provides a space for in-depth engagements out of public view, offering intimate classes to affiliated New Museum partners. Home Economics is a series of courses led by Karen Rose, Aimee Meredith Cox, and Kaoru Watanabe, which is supported by Simone Leigh's A Blade of Grass Fellowship for Socially Engaged Art. The series is geared toward creating an arsenal of skills to sharpen the critical thinking, self-awareness, and strategic planning of young black women in New York. Watanabe will also lead workshops with young adults from the Hetrick-Martin Institute—an organization that provides services for LGBTQ youth—on drum-making and taiko drumming. Working closely with Cox, Rose, and Museum staff, youth in the New Museum Teen Apprentice Program will provide assistance with exhibition programs as Waiting Room Apprentices and participate in private workshops as part of the Museum's internship program.

SUPPORT

"Simone Leigh: The Waiting Room" is made possible by support provided by the Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation and the Toby Devan Lewis Emerging Artists Exhibitions Fund.

Artist commissions at the New Museum are generously supported by the Neeson / Edlis Artist Commissions Fund. Artist residencies are made possible, in part, by Laurie Wolfert.

Further exhibition support is provided by public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature, and from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.

Endowment support is provided by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, the Skadden, Arps Education Programs Fund, and the William Randolph Hearst Endowed Fund for Education Programs at the New Museum.

Special thanks to A Blade of Grass.

ABOUT NEW MUSEUM

The New Museum is the only museum in New York City exclusively devoted to contemporary art. Founded in 1977, the New Museum is a center for exhibitions, information, and documentation about living artists from around the world. From its beginnings as a one-room office on Hudson Street to the inauguration of its first freestanding building on the Bowery designed by SANAA in 2007, the New Museum continues to be a place of experimentation and a hub of new art and new ideas.

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