

DENNY DIMIN GALLERY

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Paula Wilson: *The Light Becomes You* at Denny Dimin Gallery November 29, 2018 - January 27, 2019

Denny Dimin Gallery is pleased to announce *The Light Becomes You*, a solo exhibition by Paula Wilson, on view from November 29th, 2018 to January 27th, 2019. This is the artist's first solo exhibition with the gallery.

The Light Becomes You surveys the most personal and political themes of Paula Wilson's work—sexuality and connection, nature and culture, technology and vision. The exhibition encompasses Wilson's expansive multimedia practice that includes video, print, painting, and textiles. When her work unfolds through many layers and operates on many levels, it is characterized by lush patterns, vibrant colors, and illuminous representations. Looking at her role in our contemporary culture, Wilson considers it as a mash-up of traditional and contemporary visual forms. Aware of technology's role in altering the way we see and alluding to it with prevalent imagery of cell phones, headphones, and virtual reality, Wilson reimagines art historical tropes such as Grecian vessels, monuments, self-portraiture and still lifes. Many of the works play with light as in interior scenes with windows bisecting rooms to illuminate multiple viewpoints. Wilson asks, "What do we turn our attention to?", and thereby reveals her own multifaceted reality.

Shown for the first time in New York City, the video, *Salty & Fresh* (2014), filmed on Virginia Key Beach, the first "colored-only" beach in Miami, "exhibits a creation myth that is cross-pollinated between imagination and history; a mythologized humanism that defies the boundaries separating greco-roman amphorae and the United States' history of segregation. The emergent scene represents a diasporic collage of asses—face painted—rising from the ocean tide with the character of the artist (The Creator), modifying facial expressions with an oversized brush and palette. From the coast line an audience of picnickers spectate through technological mediation, either ironically ignorant or overly aware of their role as witness to a mythology catalyzing in the water."¹

Wilson combines printmaking, painting, sculpture and video in her works and installations. The large scale paintings in the exhibition, *Drawn* and *Window Sill*, have videos embedded in the paintings expanding the narratives of the scenes. One of the most prominent themes of the work is connection, with imagery of cell phones, personal mementos, and figures embracing. Wilson lives in Carrizozo, an old railroad town in the high desert planes of New Mexico. Nature and her small town New Mexico environs are frequently represented in the paintings offering dense natural and economic paradigms at play in the work. By wearing only clothing that she makes herself, and jewelry made by her partner, Wilson further asserts artistic control over her relationship with the world.

The exhibition features a new video work by Wilson, *Living Monument*. The two-channel video presents footage on one screen of the removal of a confederate monument in New Orleans, the General Beauregard Equestrian Statue, in May 2017. The second screen depicts a covert

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1 Eleanor Ford, Co-Director of Cherry & Lucic, Portland, Oregon, 2014.

performance by Wilson in which she dances at dawn atop the remaining base of the statue before she was forced to leave the premises by law enforcement. Inspired by the vibrant tradition of second-line parades in New Orleans, Wilson employs the empty base as a pedestal to be acted upon-- celebrating, in a hand-painted costume, the life force of the moment.

Paula Wilson received an MFA from Columbia and a BFA from Washington University in St. Louis, MO. Wilson first exhibited with Denny Dimin Gallery in a group exhibition called *The Unhomely* in 2017. Wilson's most recent solo exhibitions were *Spread Wild: Pleasures of the Yucca at Smack Mellon* (2018), *FLOORED* at Williamson | Knight (2018), *Salty & Fresh* at Emerson Dorsch Gallery, Miami FL (2017) and *The Backward Glance* at Bemis Center for Contemporary Art, Omaha, NE (2017). She has been included in four exhibitions at the Studio Museum in Harlem, exhibitions at Skidmore College (2015), Inside-Out Art Museum in Beijing (2014), Postmasters Gallery (2010), Weatherspoon Art Museum, Greensboro, NC (2010), Contemporary Arts Museum Houston (2009), Zacheta National Gallery of Art in Warsaw (2007), Sikkema Jenkins & Co. (2013 and 2006), just to name a few. She has been featured in publications such as *Hyperallergic*, *Artforum*, *The New York Times*, *the New York Observer*, and *The New Yorker*. Wilson's artwork is in many prestigious collections including The Studio Museum in Harlem, the New York Public Library, Yale University, Saatchi Gallery, and The Fabric Workshop.

Please join us for an opening reception for the artist, Paula Wilson on Thursday, November 29th, from 6 to 8 p.m. Denny Dimin Gallery is located at 261 Broome Street in New York City. The hours are Tuesday to Sunday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. The gallery will be closed for the holidays from December 24th through January 1st. For further information, contact Elizabeth Denny or Robert Dimin at 212-226-6537 or by email at elizabeth@dennydimingallery.com or robert@dennydimingallery.com.