Simone Leigh (American, b. 1967)

Leigh at the Guggenheim

Read an interview from 2009 in Art21 magazine. Leigh broke into the mainstream contemporary art world with a 2010 residency at the Studio Museum in Harlem.

In 2014, Leigh created the Free People’s Medical Clinic in collaboration with Creative Time. The project reenacted the Black Panther Party’s initiative of the same name. Watch a video of the project and read Cyrée Jarelle Johnson’s article, “Simone Leigh: The Privacy to Heal.”

Hammer Projects: Simone Leigh was on display at the Hammer Museum in 2016. Browse through the image gallery and see related programs from the exhibition. That same year, the artist was a Blade of Grass Fellow for Socially Engaged Art.

Leigh’s 2016 solo exhibition, The Waiting Room, was on display at the New Museum. Read an article by Nadja Sayei in The Guardian, “Simone Leigh’s The Waiting Room: art that tries to heal black women’s pain,” and a review by Terence Trouillot in Bomb Magazine. While exhibiting at the New Museum, Leigh founded the organization Black Women Artists for Black Lives Matter in response to the murder of Philando Castille and other injustices against black lives. Read an article in the New York Times about the initiative.

Simone Leigh was on display at Luhring Augustine Gallery in 2018. Read Hyperallergic’s review, “The Overdue Skyrocketing of Simone Leigh.”

Leigh won the Hugo Boss Prize in 2018, which awards a solo exhibition at the Guggenheim. Read an article in Cultured Magazine about her success and watch her artist profile video from the Guggenheim.

Look through Leigh’s contributions to the 2019 Whitney Biennial and watch an interview with the artist on CBS Mornings.

New York’s High Line Plinth commissioned Leigh to create a sculpture in 2019, which was on display until 2021. Read Nkgopoleng Moloi’s reaction to the artwork in Elephant and Artsy’s series, “This Artwork Changed My Life.”

Read The Art Newspaper’s interview with the artist on the theme of invisibility.

Take a virtual tour of Leigh’s 2020 solo exhibition at David Kordansky Gallery.

In 2020, Boston’s Institute of Contemporary Art announced that Leigh will represent the United States at the 2022 Venice Biennale. Months before the Biennale, Leigh announced a split with the gallery Hauser & Worth.
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**Untitled, 2022-2023**
Stoneware

Private Collection; L2023:104.1

Simone Leigh’s sculpture and installation practice is inspired by African and African American art, feminism, and performance. The artist is focused on Black female subjectivity; her ceramic and mixed-media sculptures often feature the Black female body with smoothed-out eyes or no face, tiny roses or cowrie shells on her head, and raffia skirts. **Untitled** is a bust with tightly curled roses that reflect a tall hairstyle. Though the figure has no eyes, her agency, emotion, and presence are all clearly legible. When she represented the United States at the 2022 Venice Biennale, Leigh said: “To be sovereign is to not be subject to another’s authority, another’s desires, or another’s gaze but rather to be the author of one’s own history.”

*On view November 8, 2023 – February 11, 2024*