



Glenn Ligon

Some Black Parisians

2019

Neon and paint

Musée d'Orsay, end-of-the-nave towers

26 mars – 21 juillet 2019



Glenn Ligon, preparatory study, 2018

The installation, “Some Black Parisians,” consists of 12 large scale neons which highlight the names of some of the models, performers and writers who appear in important French works of art from the 19th and early 20th centuries.

While some of these figures are well known to the general public (Josephine Baker and Alexandre Dumas père, for example) some, such as Laure, who posed as a maid for Édouard Manet’s painting *Olympia*, remain relatively obscure. Although a central figure in one of Manet’s most important works, as of yet Laure’s surname is unknown, and her presence is often barely acknowledged in the extensive scholarship on the work.

This “highly visible invisibility” is the fate of many black figures in French art and “Some Black Parisians” is an attempt to redress this by placing Laure’s name, among others, “up in lights.” Rendered in white neon script painted black on the front, the names will be placed on the two towers at the end of the museum’s central nave. The neon signatures were created by asking friends and colleagues to write the names of various models in their own handwriting. These were then blown-up in scale and mounted on aluminum supports. Visible from many vantage points within the museum, the prominence of the names will signal a shift in the importance and legibility of these black Parisians within the history of art.

In addition to the twelve names, the words “nom inconnu” will appear in neon typeface at the top of one of the towers, an acknowledgment of the names of models we still do not know.

Artist Biography:

Glenn Ligon (b. 1960) lives and works in New York. His solo exhibitions include Camden Arts Centre, London (2014-15); Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2011); The Power Plant, Toronto (2005); The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York (2001); Kunstverein, Munich (2001); Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (2000); and the Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia (1998). His work was included in Documenta XI (2002); in two Whitney Biennials (1991, 1993); and in *All the World's Futures* at the 56th International Art Exhibition La Biennale di Venezia (2015). Recent curatorial projects include *Blue Black* at the Pulitzer Arts Foundation (2017) and *Encounters and Collisions*, done in collaboration with Nottingham Contemporary and Tate Liverpool (2015).

Ligon has received numerous awards and recognitions for his work, including the Smithsonian Archives of American Art *Archives of American Art Medal* (2017); the Visual AIDS *Vanguard Award* (2016); the *Studio Museum's Joyce Alexander Wein Artist Prize* (2009); the *Skowhegan Medal for Painting* (2006); a *John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship* (2003); and a *Joan Mitchell Foundation Grant* (1997).

Recent monographs and publications on his work include *Debris Field/ Notes for a Poem on the Third World/ Soleil Nègre* (Galerie Chantal Crousel/Is—Land édition, 2018); *Untitled (I am a Man)* (Afterall Books, 2018); *Blue Black* (Pulitzer Arts Foundation, 2017); *A People on the Cover* (Ridinghouse, 2015); *Encounters and Collisions* (Nottingham Contemporary and Tate, 2015); *Come Out* (Ridinghouse, 2014); *Glenn Ligon: AMERICA* (Whitney Museum of American Art, 2011); *Yourself in the World: Selected Writings and Interviews* (Yale University Press, 2011).



Avec la collaboration exceptionnelle de la **Galerie Chantal Crousel** et de la **Galerie Regen Projects**

Informations pratiques

Horaires : tous les jours, sauf le lundi, de 9h30 à 18h, le jeudi jusqu'à 21h45.

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Accès : Musée d'Orsay, entrée par le parvis, 1, rue de la Légion d'Honneur, 75007 Paris

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