

# ronald feldman gallery

For immediate release: October 15, 2018

*"Icons," a solo exhibition of recent works on paper by the artist Rico Gatson, curated by Hallie Ringle, [at the Studio Museum of Harlem] takes this ecstasy in personhood and makes it as visible as people themselves. Gatson appropriates old photographic images of famous black Americans ... and surrounds them with bright color lines that shoot outward from the personages to the borders of the page. ... The lines are reminiscent of Sol LeWitt's wall drawings; these works feel like a slight rebuke of Minimalism's turn away from the human form. Stripped of the cityscapes and histories into which they were born – and which by their exertions, they helped in varying degrees, to change – Gatson's "icons" held my anxieties at bay, if only for a while. Politics pass away, they seem to say. People never do, in art at least."*

Vinson Cunningham, "How Radical Can a Portrait Be?" The New Yorker,

May 5, 2017

## RICO GATSON

### MY EYES HAVE SEEN

#### October 27 - December 21

Rico Gatson, who incorporates themes that relate to African-American histories and spirituality, will exhibit new works comprising film, paintings, sculpture, and drawings for his seventh solo exhibition at the Feldman Gallery. The title of the exhibition, *My Eyes Have Seen*, is inspired by "Battle Hymn of the Republic," also known as "Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory," and derived from the marching song "John Brown's Body." Sung by Union soldiers, it has an anti-slavery subtext and inspires hope and purpose for the fight.

With his newest exhibition, *My Eyes Have Seen*, Gatson takes as his subject the complexity of processing the grief of the dark African American past. A theme underlying the unity of the artworks on display is the necessity to "know" even though what one sees is not good. To know is to bring light to darkness which is rendered metaphorically in many of the works.

The exhibition features a projected video, shot by Gatson on a recent trip to Mississippi, which takes as its subject the murder of Emmett Till in 1955. The film depicts the boy's known route from Bryant's store to the barn where he was killed to the river where his body was dumped and to the courthouse where the trial was held. The result is a meditative film montage, reminiscent of Gatson's earlier short kaleidoscopic videos. Gatson invents a visual language that discusses the unspeakable – the murder of a child. The specificity of his journey bears witness, and the film is a station for contemplation.

Two new paintings are *Untitled (The Cotton Planter and his Pickers)*, whose composition combines black bars with the luminosity of light, and *Harriet Tubman*, related to Gatson's "icon" drawings which celebrate prominent African Americans. New "icon" drawings will also be on view including one of slain Civil Rights Attorney Medgar Evers who investigated the murder of Emmett Till. Also included in the exhibition is an installation of colorful painted wood panels that lean against the wall and incorporate collage elements and geometric patterns. They radiate energy and power and function as talismans for good luck and protection. Two free-standing sculptures channel the work of Louise Nevelson and Louise Bourgeois.

Gatson had a one-person show, *Rico Gatson: Icon's 2007-2017*, at The Studio Museum in Harlem in 2017. He has been selected to exhibit in the E/AB Fair at the Tunnel, NYC, October 25 - 28, 2018.

**Opening Reception: Saturday, October 27, 6-8pm.** Gallery hours are Tuesday - Saturday, 10-6. Monday by appointment. For more information, contact Vince Ruvolo at (212) 226-3232 or [vince@feldmangallery.com](mailto:vince@feldmangallery.com).

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