

STEVEN ZEVITAS GALLERY

450 Harrison Avenue #47, Boston, Massachusetts 02118
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Blueberry (The Right to Self), 2019, acrylic and mixed media on canvas, 82 x 50 inches

JORDAN SEABERRY: *We Speak Upon the Ashes*

June 7 – July 27, 2019

opening reception: June 7, 5:30 – 8 pm

Steven Zevitas Gallery is pleased to present *We Speak Upon the Ashes*, an exhibition of new works by Jordan Seaberry. The exhibition will run from June 7 – July 27, 2019 with an opening reception Friday, June 7, from 5:30 – 8 PM.

I was 21 and new to grassroots organizing when the State of Georgia executed Troy Davis, although he was sentenced to death when I was two. I had learned to paint in those intervening years while the country carried out the Gulf War, the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan, a coup in Libya, and so on.

In watching and experiencing these events, it became clear to me that the most visible result of war is the flight pattern of the refugee. This is forgotten in most of the narratives surrounding such forced migrations. For people like my grandfather, who was raised in the South, the fiction tethered to the Great Migration is that it was set in motion by Black families emigrating to the industrialized North in search of jobs. In reality, my grandfather didn't run to anything. He ran from the state sanctioned terrorism that became the hallmark of his tiny town in Mississippi and countless others. If we believe, as I do, that our historical positioning influences the present operation of our society, then the same must be true of an individual life; I was born in Chicago, a metropolis known for its high murder rate, only because my grandfather fled murder in Shuqualak, a town of de jure terror.

Being a student of Black history largely means possessing a decent imagination, one different from the student of European history whose mastery is facilitated by a zealously meticulous and inflexible record. So little Black history exists in the concrete that to chart a history of your own family is to try to read the pencil marks left after the eraser has cleaned the writing off. To piece together the story of the night of my family's exile is to imagine it for the first time. In the wake of erasure, history and myth become the same. The artist becomes the historian, griot, and architect.

Today, the push for this historical visibility is manifested in the fight for a new societal operation: to reform the Court Debt regime, to assert a constitutional right to an education through federal lawsuit, to outlaw housing discrimination against Section 8 recipients, to eliminate cash bail, and to protect reproductive healthcare.

*Each work in *We Speak Upon the Ashes* calls to specific grassroots organizing on the ground, right now, in my current city of Providence, and to the people like my grandfather, from Shuqualak, Mississippi, who concretize my commitment to it.*

Policy change requires the imagination of something new. Imagine with us.

JORDAN SEABERRY (b. Chicago, IL) lives and works in Providence, RI. He received his BFA from Rhode Island School of Design, attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in 2015, and will be graduating with a Masters in the Studies of Law from the Roger Williams University School of Law (Bristol, RI). He is included in the 2019 New England Biennial (deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum, Lincoln, MA) and has been featured in exhibitions with RISD Museum (Providence, RI), Napoleon Gallery (Philadelphia, PA), Boston Center for the Arts (Boston, MA), Zevitas Marcus (Los Angeles, CA), Brown University (Providence, RI), Waterville Art Center (Waterville, ME), Marwen Art Foundation (Chicago, IL), and the Center for Reconciliation (Providence, RI). He currently serves as the Director of Public Policy and Advocacy at the Nonviolence Institute. This is Jordan Seaberry's first solo exhibition with a commercial gallery and his first show at Steven Zevitas Gallery.

For additional information or visual material, please contact the gallery at 617-778-5265 or by email at info@stevenzevitasgallery.com.