

TI-ROCK MOORE

“A Burning House”

26 July – 26 August 2017

PRESS RELEASE

July 16, 2017 (New Orleans, LA) **JONATHAN FERRARA GALLERY** is pleased to present “A Burning House”, the first solo New Orleans exhibition of activist artist **Ti-Rock Moore**. The exhibition will be on view from 26 July through 26 August with an opening reception on Saturday 5 August in conjunction with the annual Whitney White Linen Night, which brings 50,000 patrons to the Arts District New Orleans (ADNO).

A Burning House takes as its point of departure an historic conversation between colleagues and activists Harry Belafonte and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., during which King expresses his fears: “We have fought hard and long for integration, as I believe we should have, and I know that we will win. But I've come to believe we're integrating into a burning house.” *A Burning House* features all new works created by Moore expressly for the exhibition, including two site-specific, one-night installation/performances: “Converge,” a provocative audience participation piece with artistic contributions from New Orleans writers Kristina Kay Robinson, Valentine The exhibition also debuts “Gazing,” an evocative, collaborative performance work with curator and theorist Nicolas Brierre Aziz.

Moore says of the exhibition concept . . . *Who should speak when the subject of art is racism? Is it the subject/victim only, when/if he or she is still able to speak? Or is it the perpetrator, in the zero sum game, victor-takes-the-spoils collapsing American psyche? With racism, you have two actors, two groups, a protagonist and an antagonist, a perpetrator and a victim, an Us and a Them, often, though not always, black and white. In this instance, whose voice has the authority to speak, indeed, to critique, the juggernaut of racism in the United States, that groaning, bloated, yet somehow newly recharged monster that so many people had naïvely relegated to the past? Who is responsible for her group; who is implicated by her privilege, and who by her debasement? And will the message necessarily be different if it comes from either messenger?*

I acknowledge my white privilege as a direct remnant of slavery, the result of atrocities committed against others. I explore it through my acute awareness of the unearned advantage my white skin holds. White privilege controls America's heartbeat, and our nation's collective loss of memory, our historical amnesia, is to blame. I examine myself and identity in a critical manner; I hold my audience and me accountable for our complicity. Indeed, it is past time for white Americans to hold accountability for and stand up to the injustices of racial oppression.

My art is an expression of my activism, constantly and consistently mining the past to disrupt the present in order to secure the future. It is loud, expressing the pain and rage of our continued collective disavowal of responsibility from the very systems we uphold. My work is rooted in a critique of white supremacy and the systemic oppression of people of color in the United States, and it is reactive to the violent, vicious, genocidal, and unapologetic way in which we differentiate between each other based on race, gender, and class.

This is the great moral issue of our time. And this is why I've devoted my artistic practice entirely to



breaking white denial and addressing social justice issues centered on racism. The notion of the artist as activist is at the root of my practice. My art is protest art and is reactive and loud and meant to elicit a higher consciousness. It should be observed as a civic tool. White privilege, white power and white supremacy control America's heartbeat, and our nation's collective loss of memory, our historical amnesia is to blame. My work reflects my acute awareness of the unearned advantages my white skin holds.

Born and raised in New Orleans' French Quarter Moore emerged in 2014 with protest works created, in part, in response to the devastating, lingering effects of Hurricane Katrina. Moore renamed herself in homage to colorful and controversial twentieth-century painter Noel Rockmore, a New Yorker turned New Orleanian who, like Moore, had been the child of artists. Moore's self-identification (petit or 'tit in local parlance) with the mercurial Rockmore as a kind of spiritual protégé positions her within both local history and artistic traditions. Yet there is nothing small about Moore's driving vision and ambition for her work, which focuses on dismantling the structures that support racism, a distinctly American narrative she seeks to unravel through her work.

Ti-Rock Moore's work has been exhibited across the country including The Houston Museum of African American Culture, the Bombay Sapphire Artisan Series and Louisiana Contemporary at the Ogden Museum. Her work is in several prominent collections including Beth Rudin DeWoody, Lester Marks, Ric Whitney and Tina Perry-Whitney, The Lauren and Richard Nijkerk Collection in Singapore, Peggy Cooper Catfriz and the TV series *Empire*.

For further information, press or sales inquiries please contact the gallery director, Matthew Weldon Showman, at matthew@jonathanferraragallery.com or at the gallery +1.504.522.5471. Please join the conversation with JFG on Facebook (@Jonathan Ferrara Gallery), Twitter (@JFerraraGallery), and Instagram (@JonathanFerraraGallery) via the hashtags #TiRockMoore, #ABurningHouse, and #JonathanFerraraGallery.