

## Press Release

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### Gamson Artist Lecture Series

## Lorna Simpson

Wednesday, October 24, 2018, 6:30–8PM



Lorna Simpson, *Ice 4*, 2018. Ink and acrylic on gessoed wood panel, 102 x 144 x 1 3/8 in. Edition unique. Photo: James Wang. © Lorna Simpson. Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth.

#LornaSimpson  
#GamsonArtistLecture  
#atCAMH  
@camhouston

#### Media Contact

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HOUSTON, TX (August 2, 2018)—The Contemporary Arts Museum Houston (CAMH) is pleased to announce the third presentation of the institution's Gamson Artist Lecture Series, which brings world-renowned contemporary art voices to Houston to discuss the process and inspiration behind their work and what it means to be an artist working today. Lorna Simpson, one of the most respected artists working today, will be the featured speaker on Wednesday, October 24, 2018 from 6:30–8PM. The talk will be held at CAMH and is free to the public. However, tickets are required and will be made available for reservation at noon on Friday, September 21, 2018. Advance tickets will be available to CAMH Members Wednesday, September 19, 2018 at noon. Space is limited. Please visit CAMH.ORG for more information.

# Contemporary Arts Museum Houston

5216 Montrose Boulevard  
Houston, Texas 77006  
CAMH.ORG | #atCAMH

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Lorna Simpson. Photo: James Wang

As one of the leading artists of her generation, Lorna Simpson came to prominence in the 1980s through her pioneering approach to conceptual photography. Simpson's early work—particularly her striking juxtapositions of text and staged images—raised questions about the nature of representation, identity, gender, race, and history that continue to drive the artist's expanding and multi-disciplinary practice today. She deftly explores the medium's umbilical relation to memory and history, both central themes within her work.

Studying on the West Coast in the mid-1980s, Simpson was part of a generation of artists who utilized conceptual approaches to undermine the credibility and apparent neutrality of language and images. Her most iconic works from this period depict African-American figures seen only from behind or in fragments. Photographed in a neutral studio space, the figures are tied neither to a specific place nor time. Drawing upon a long-standing interest in poetry and literature, the artist accompanies these images with her own fragmented text, which is at times infused with the suggestion of violence or trauma. The incredibly powerful works entangle viewers into an equivocal web of meaning, with what is unseen and left unsaid as important as that which the artist does disclose. Seemingly straightforward, these works are in fact near-ennigmas, as complex as the subject matter they take on.

Over the past 30 years, Simpson has continued to probe these questions while expanding her practice to encompass various media including film and video, painting, drawing, and sculpture. Her recent works incorporate appropriated imagery from vintage *Jet* and *Ebony* magazines, found photo booth images, and discarded *Associated Press* photos of natural elements—particularly ice, a motif that appears in her sculptural work in the form of glistening 'ice' blocks made of glass. The new work continues to immerse viewers in layers of bewitching paradoxes, threading dichotomies of figuration and abstraction, past and present, destruction and creation, and male and female. Layered and multivalent, Simpson's practice deploys metaphor, metonymy, and formal prowess to offer a potent response to American life today.

Among Simpson's awards and honors were a National Endowment for the Arts fellowship (1985), twice exhibited at the Venice Biennale (1990 [becoming the first African-American woman to exhibit at the Biennale] and in 2015), and the Whitney Museum American Art Award (2001). In 2007 her work was featured in a 20-year retrospective at the Whitney Museum of Art, New York, New York.

The lecture at CAMH will feature a unique opportunity to witness this forward-focused artist present a rare look back at her esteemed career and a glimpse into what might be coming next.

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### **About the Artist**

Lorna Simpson was born in 1960 in Brooklyn, New York where she lives and works to this day. Her unprecedented exhibition history includes exhibits at The New Museum, New York, New York; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts; The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York; Baltimore Museum of Art, Maryland; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, New York; Milwaukee Art Museum, Wisconsin; Virginia Museum of Art, Richmond; Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indiana; The National Museum of Art, Osaka, Japan; Munich Kunsthalle, Germany; Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, Texas; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, California; Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield, Connecticut; Tel Aviv Museum, Israel; SITE Santa Fe, New Mexico; The Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, D.C.; The Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois; Corcoran Museum of Art, Washington, D.C.; Auckland Triennial, New Zealand; The Pera Museum, Istanbul, Turkey; Museu da República, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Tate Liverpool, United Kingdom; Centre Pompidou, Paris, France; Tate Modern, London, United Kingdom, among many others. Simpson is represented worldwide by Hauser & Wirth.

### **Support**

The Gamson Artist Lecture Series is supported by Barbara and Michael Gamson.

### **CAMH Mission**

The Contemporary Arts Museum Houston presents extraordinary, thought-provoking arts programming and exhibitions to educate and inspire audiences nationally and internationally.

### **General Information**

The Contemporary Arts Museum Houston is located at 5216 Montrose Boulevard, at the corner of Montrose and Bissonnet, in the heart of Houston's Museum District. Hours are Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday 10AM–7PM, Thursday 10AM–9PM, Saturday 10AM–6PM, and Sunday 12PM–6PM. Admission is always free. For more information, visit CAMH.ORG or call 713.284.8250.