



400 South Peoria Street (MC 034)  
Chicago, IL 60607  
312-996-6114  
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Gallery hours:  
Tuesday-Friday 10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.  
Saturday 12:00-5:00 p.m.

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## ***The Mask of Prosperity***

**May 10–August 2, 2024**



cameron clayborn, *Homegrown #5*, 2022. Courtesy the artist and Simone Subal Gallery, New York. Photo by Olympia Shannon.

**Artists: Sonya Clark, cameron clayborn, Eli Greene, S\*an D. Henry-Smith, Caroline Kent and Nate Young, Bouchra Khalili, Katherine Simóne Reynolds, Gabrielle Octavia Rucker, Carmen Winant**

Gallery 400 at the University of Illinois Chicago is pleased to announce [\*The Mask of Prosperity\*](#), a group exhibition that takes shape around the role inheritance has across multiple dimensions of our lives. Inheritance is commonly understood as a will, a promise of ownership that ensures the passing down and accumulation of property and capital from one generation to the next. For many, this topic strikes a personal chord, demanding reflection on our relationships with ancestors and what we would like to endow our descendants with. Expanding on this strand of thinking, *The Mask of Prosperity*, curated by Gallery 400 Assistant Director Denny Mwaura, is posed as an inquiry that probes the tensions between which legacies we choose to acquire, hold on to, or reject across culture and personal life.

The featured artists present a spectrum of reflections interrogating how legacies linked to language, property, social movement, and moral principles intensify to possibly build a prosperous life. A central concern in the exhibition is, how do we come into possession of material and intangible things and what are their lasting impressions on determining our sense of self? The scenes of life collected and animated in the exhibition capture intimate pursuits to parse out unfinished business with loss, grief, past, present, and future. These scenes, born from the artists' keen observation of their kinship structures, political environments, and private lives, are rendered into a mirror in which we can recognize inheritance's meaning and value in our lives.

Newly commissioned contributions by Caroline Kent and Nate Young, Eli Greene, Katherine Simóne Reynolds, Gabrielle Octavia Rucker, and S\*an D. Henry-Smith emerged from conversations with these artists over the past two years. Artists and spouses Caroline Kent and Nate Young present a collaborative installation that holds a legacy of their dedication to an uncompromising work ethic embedded in their practices. The work traces back to both their family's prior generations and functions as an archive of photographs, documents, and works from their oeuvres that they will pass down to their children. Katherine Simóne Reynolds meditates on her parents' marriage, their divorce, her father's death, and her inheritance through opaque and transparent display approaches that reveal the existence of a predatory industry that preys on and profits off estate heirs. Cameron Clayborn's cell-like sculpture utilizes architectural materials and draws from their childhood memories in their grandmother's house in Malvern, Arkansas, to consider its importance in forming their Black, femme, and Southern identity. Eli Greene's installation of light boxes offers a resting place for family photographs, drawings, and found objects, giving them new purposes that never lose connections to their origins. S\*an D. Henry Smith's photographs of spaces they have lived between New York City, London, and Amsterdam attribute inheritance to a sense of wandering and displacement related to the Middle Passage. Gabrielle Octavia Rucker's asemic writing—an abstract and intuitive calligraphic writing form—and its translation into the Latin alphabet examines the loss of one's language and sense of home due to systemic poverty.

Artists Sonya Clark, Bouchra Khalili, and Carmen Winant's works are anchored by how our lived conditions today are indebted to social movements and revolutionary thought that imagine a prosperous life beyond what the present avails. Clark's works grapple with the immeasurable

wealth acquired by Western nations during the transatlantic slave trade and how African Americans have expressed self-determination and liberation through the resonant musicality of the hymn “Lift Every Voice and Sing.” With the recent overturning of *Roe v. Wade* in the United States, Carmen Winant’s photographic assemblages center the behind-the-scenes work in Midwestern health clinics and abortion clinics, making visible lateral forms of kinships and transmission of knowledge born from care and feminist traditions. Bouchra Khalili’s politically salient video trilogy, *The Speeches Series*, chronicles the lives of immigrants in the United States and Europe, addressing their labor and belonging struggles and personal alignment with writing from radical thinkers such as Malcolm X and Édouard Glissant. The unfolding narratives in *The Mask of Prosperity* ask for a consideration of how legacies we voluntarily and involuntarily acquire transform us and also their vitality to our self-formation.

**Related Programs:*****The Mask of Prosperity* Opening Reception**

Friday, May 10, 2024

6-8:00 p.m.

UIC Gallery 400

***The Mask of Prosperity* Curatorial Walkthrough**

Thursday, May 30, 2024

5-6:30 p.m.

UIC Gallery 400

**Carmen Winant in conversation with Natalie Bennett**

Thursday, June 20, 2024

5–6:30 p.m.

Location TBD

***The Mask of Prosperity* Artist Roundtable**

Thursday, July 11, 2024

5-6:30 p.m.

Virtual via Zoom

***The Mask of Prosperity* Virtual Tour with the UIC Disability Cultural Center**

Thursday, August 1, 2024

12–1:00 p.m. CT

Virtual via Zoom

Visit [UIC Gallery 400](#) for full details.**Tours:**

Gallery staff regularly offer exhibition tours. To schedule a tour that meets the specific needs and interests of your group, contact us at 312-996-6114 or [gallery400@uic.edu](mailto:gallery400@uic.edu).

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Support for *The Mask of Prosperity* is provided by the Illinois Arts Council Agency and the School of Art & Art History, College of Architecture, Design, and the Arts at the University of Illinois Chicago.

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Founded in 1983, UIC Gallery 400 is one of the nation's most vibrant university galleries, showcasing work at the leading edge of contemporary art, architecture, and design. The Gallery's program of exhibitions, lectures, film and video screenings, and performances features

interdisciplinary and experimental practices. Operating within the School of Art and Art History in the College of Architecture, Design, and the Arts at the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC), Gallery 400 endeavors to make the arts and its practitioners accessible to a broad spectrum of the public and to cultivate a variety of cultural and intellectual perspectives. Gallery 400 is recognized for its support of the creation of new work, the diversity of its programs and participants, and the development of experimental models for multidisciplinary exhibitions.

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