

Nasher Sculpture Center Announces Next Nasher Public Exhibition Artist, Vicki Meek

Dallas-based artist with research-based practice presents a shrine dedicated to the Black community

DALLAS, Texas (January 5, 2021)—The Nasher Sculpture Center announces the fourth exhibition for Nasher Public in the Nasher Store gallery, *Stony the Road We Trod*, by artist Vicki Meek. On view January 7 – February 14, 2021.

Taking its title from a lyric of “Lift Ev’ry Voice and Sing,” the Black national anthem, Vicki Meek’s installation *Stony the Road We Trod* offers a contemporary shrine dedicated to the Black community. Drawing upon the culture of Yoruba belief, Adinkra symbols of Ghana, and other metaphorical elements, Meek has transformed the Nasher Store Gallery into an uplifting space of healing and encouragement.

Meek’s shrine brings together colors, objects and emblems with long histories in her work and deep roots in traditional African cultures as well as American history. On the walls, panels are painted blue, a protection color in African art; photographs of resistance and resilience offer testimony to the “stony road” trod by Black Americans, given physical form in the marble chips below. Peat moss, a substance used for healing wounds in natural medicine, offers a symbolic balm for these trials. White turtles emblemize continuity from past to present, while twelve white roosters stand for the ancestors, each labeled with the name of one of the eleven tribes of West Africa that were the main African groups to be enslaved. In addition to these eleven, Meek includes a twelfth—African Americans, because, as she points out, “we [Black Americans] became a whole different tribe, based upon the way we were thrown together.” Adinkra symbols stand for the values of resilience, unity, love, and Sankofa, or the ability to connect to the past. The presence of a Mende helmet mask provides a beneficent connection to what Meek describes as “Mother Africa.”

Described by the artist as “her personal acknowledgement that Black Lives Matter,” *Stony the Road We Trod* exemplifies Meek’s artistic practice and its roots in deep historical research. For three decades, she has turned to the history of African art and culture—particularly the regions of West Africa whose populations comprise the majority of those taken into slavery—to create a visual language that forges connections between contemporary Black communities, the “stony road” of their diasporic history, and their African past. The sacred sites she creates from these elements provide places of access to ancestors and their healing wisdom. Her very creation of such sites is a restorative act, providing respite and comfort, aesthetic and spiritual sustenance, and a heightened awareness of Black Americans’ connections to a profoundly rich ancestral history.

“As an artist obtaining a Master of Fine Arts at the height of the Black Power Movement,” says Meek, “it is not surprising that my work embraces a political outlook, especially given that my artistic idols are Elizabeth Catlett, Jacob Lawrence and Romare Bearden. The aesthetic I developed includes both the notion of utilizing text and symbolism derived from West Africa and other parts of the African diaspora, while striving to educate the viewer on lost history and social issues. I’ve explored imagery that is not rooted in polemics, but that prompts dialogue around cultural memory and identity.”

Visitors to the exhibition are invited to write an affirmation to the Black community on slips of gold paper provided at the table near the entrance to the gallery.

The Nasher Public exhibition coincides with Meeks's retrospective at the African American Museum in Dallas, *Vicki Meek: Three Decades of Social Commentary*, on view through March 21.

For high res images, please follow [this link](#). (Note: Installation images will be added to the folder on January 7.)

About Vicki Meek | Vicki Meek has exhibited widely and is in the permanent collections of the African American Museum Dallas, Fort Wayne Museum of Art, and Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. She was awarded three public arts commissions with Dallas Area Rapid Transit Art Program, was co-artist on the Dallas Convention Center Public Art Project (the largest public art project in Dallas), and was one of ten artists in Nasher XChange, the Nasher Sculpture Center's tenth anniversary public sculpture exhibition. Meek resides in Dallas, where she is also an independent curator and writes cultural criticism.

About Nasher Public | Nasher Public is a year-long, two-pronged public art initiative called which aims to generate access to public art by North Texas artists at the Nasher and throughout the greater Dallas community. The project will launch first at the Nasher in a newly formed gallery, presenting monthly exhibitions over the next year, followed by an ongoing series of off-site exhibitions in partnership with area businesses. Inspired by the success of the summer 2020 series Nasher Windows, which safely presented art to the public in the Nasher Sculpture Center's vestibule while the museum was closed due to the pandemic, Nasher Public comprises a series of monthly exhibitions, each presenting work by emerging and established artists in a newly constituted gallery space formerly occupied by the Nasher Store (which will reopen in late 2021). The new gallery fronts Flora Street and is directly accessible from the Nasher's entrance foyer. For the duration of the project, the space will be open to the public free of charge during the museum's public hours, and viewable through the windows during off hours.

About Nasher Sculpture Center | Located in the heart of the Dallas Arts District, the Nasher Sculpture Center is home to the Raymond and Patsy Nasher Collection, one of the finest collections of modern and contemporary sculpture in the world, featuring more than 300 masterpieces by Calder, de Kooning, di Suvero, Giacometti, Gormley, Hepworth, Kelly, Matisse, Miró, Moore, Picasso, Rodin, Serra, and Shapiro, among others. The Nasher Sculpture Center is open Thursday through Sunday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is \$10 for adults, \$7 for seniors, \$5 for students, and free for children 12 and under and members, and includes access to special exhibitions. Visitors must book a timed ticket in advance. For more information, visit www.NasherSculptureCenter.org.

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