Hugo Boss Prize Exhibition Featuring New and Recent Work by Deana Lawson Opens at Guggenheim Museum on May 7

Exhibition: The Hugo Boss Prize 2020: Deana Lawson, Centropy
Venue: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1071 Fifth Avenue, New York
Location: Tower Level 7
Dates: May 7–October 11, 2021

(NEW YORK, NY—May 6, 2021)—From May 7–October 11, 2021, an exhibition of new and recent works by artist Deana Lawson, winner of the Hugo Boss Prize 2020, will be on view at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. Lawson’s presentation will include large-scale photographs and holograms. In addition, the museum is producing a film exploring Lawson’s practice that will be released in the early fall. Selected by a jury of international critics and curators, Lawson is the thirteenth artist to receive the biennial prize, which was established in 1996 to recognize significant achievement in contemporary art. Since the inception of the award, the associated solo exhibitions have offered an open platform for artists to present projects that realize their current creative thinking, and have formed an anchor of the Guggenheim’s contemporary program.

The Hugo Boss Prize 2020: Deana Lawson, Centropy is organized by Katherine Brinson, Daskalopoulos Curator, Contemporary Art, and Ashley James, Associate Curator, Contemporary Art. The Hugo Boss Prize and the exhibition are made possible by HUGO BOSS.

Lawson’s images are rooted in a moment from the tangible world, but ultimately exist in the shimmering in-between space of dreams, memories, and spiritual communion, where the everyday is transfigured into the uncanny and the magnificent. Her photographs and films usually result from collaborations with strangers whom the artist encounters by chance or deliberately seeks out. These individuals are often depicted within richly textured domestic settings in which the details of decor, lighting, and pose are precisely choreographed. In this way, Lawson draws on the legacies of historical portraiture, documentary photography, and the family album, but transcends these traditions, constructing scenes that merge lived experience with imagined narratives.
The aesthetics and intergenerational connectivity of the Black diaspora guide Lawson’s choice of subject matter. The regenerative forces of nature and the cycle of human life from birth to death are abiding themes, with each of her works taking its place in an overarching project that coheres into what she terms “an ever-expanding mythological extended family.” Close examination of her compositions reveals the presence of portals, adornments, and devotional objects that evoke the proximity of an unseen realm. This sense of the celestial is heightened by images of sublime natural phenomena such as galaxies and waterfalls, and in instances where the radiance of an individual seems to burn through the surface of the work itself. Lawson’s works also demonstrate a special attention to the element of light, as both key to the process by which photographs are produced, and a manifestation of the divinity that suffuses her sitters. Recently, Lawson has begun to set her works in mirrored frames that reflect light outward and materialize an exchange between her subjects and the viewer; in her words, they function as “a reflective lining between worlds, that which is ‘seen’ in the photograph, and that which ‘sees.’”

In this exhibition, large-scale photographs, some of which are embedded with holograms, are arrayed in a dense constellation that surrounds a spectral rendering of a torus—a three-dimensional shape formed by a circle rotated around a central axis. As such, the installation draws on the thermodynamic concept of centropy, a term that describes how the electrification of matter leads to regeneration and harmonious order. The same impulse of renewal through creative energy is central to Lawson’s vision, in which her subjects are figured as ineffably splendid, occupying a world that they command absolutely.

In fall 2020, Lawson was selected as the winner of the Hugo Boss Prize from a short list that included Nairy Baghramian (b. 1971, Isfahan, Iran); Kevin Beasley (b. 1985, Lynchburg, Va.); Elias Sime (b. 1968, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia); Cecilia Vicuña (b. 1948, Santiago, Chile); and Adrián Villar Rojas (b. 1980, Rosario, Argentina). The jurors were Naomi Beckwith, incoming Chief Curator of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum; Katherine Brinson, Daskalopoulos Curator, Contemporary Art, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum; Julieta González, independent curator; Christopher Y. Lew, Nancy and Fred Poses Curator, Whitney Museum of American Art; and Nat Trotman, Curator, Performance and Media, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.

On the occasion of the prize, the Guggenheim produced videos documenting the finalists’ creative processes. Visit youtube.com to watch and learn.

In September, the Guggenheim will release a short film illuminating Lawson’s artistic practice, which is being created in collaboration with renowned cinematographer Bradford Young and Ummah Chroma Creative Partners.

The exhibition includes works whose production was supported by The Lewis Center for the Arts’ Program in Visual Arts at Princeton University, where Lawson is Professor of Visual Arts.

**Deana Lawson**

Deana Lawson lives and works in New York and Los Angeles. Her work has been presented in solo exhibitions including *Deana Lawson: Centropy*, Kunsthalle Basel (2020); *Deana Lawson*, Huis Marseille, Museum voor Fotografie, Amsterdam (2019); *Deana Lawson: Planes*, The Underground Museum, Los Angeles (2018); *Deana Lawson*, Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh (2018); *Deana Lawson*,
Hugo Boss Prize History


To see a timeline and a video on the history the Hugo Boss Prize, as well as an overview of past prize catalogues, visit guggenheim.org/hugobossprize.

About HUGO BOSS AG and its support of the Guggenheim

About the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation
The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation was established in 1937 and is dedicated to promoting the understanding and appreciation of modern and contemporary art through exhibitions, education
programs, research initiatives, and publications. The international constellation of museums comprises
the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice; the
Guggenheim Museum Bilbao; and the future Guggenheim Abu Dhabi. An architectural icon and
“temple of spirit” where radical art and architecture meet, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum is
among a group of eight Frank Lloyd Wright structures in the United States recently designated as a
UNESCO World Heritage site. To learn more about the museum and the Guggenheim’s activities
around the world, visit guggenheim.org.

Visitor Information
Admission: Adults $25, students/seniors (65+) $18, members and children under 12 free. Open
Thursdays through Mondays from 11 am to 6 pm. Pay What You Wish hours are Saturdays from 4 to 6
pm, with free admission on select Saturdays. Timed tickets are required and available at
guggenheim.org/tickets. Explore the Guggenheim with our free Digital Guide, a part of the Bloomberg
Connects app. Find it in the Apple App Store or in the Google Play Store.

The Guggenheim is implementing health and safety measures in consideration of visitors and
employees and in compliance with New York State and City guidelines. Face masks are mandatory
inside the museum for anyone over the age of two. New requirements should be reviewed in advance
of a visit; they are posted on COVID-19 Safety Measures: What to Expect When Visiting.

For publicity images, visit guggenheim.org/press
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#HugoBossPrize

#1604
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FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
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Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum 05-07-2021 – 10-11-2021

Chief, 2019
Pigment print

Axis, 2018
Pigment print

Daenare, 2019
Pigment print

Latifah's Wedding, 2019
Pigment print

An Ode to Yemaya, 2019
Pigment print
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Emily and Daughter, 2015
Pigment print

Young Grandmother, 2019
Pigment print

Black Horizons, 2020
Pigment print

Vera, 2020
Pigment print

Clearing, 2013
Pigment print
Niagara Falls, 2018
Pigment print

Deleon? Unknown, 2020
Pigment print with embedded hologram

Crystal Assemblage, 2020
UV printed mirrored glass and rose quartz on mirrored glass

Holy Mami, 2021
Pigment print

Black Gold ("Earth turns to gold, in the hands of the wise," Rumi), 2021
Pigment print with embedded hologram
Monetta Passing, 2021
Pigment print

Barrington and Father, 2021
Pigment print

Dana and Sirius B, 2021
Pigment print with glossy print of Dana

Torus, 2021
Hologram
Deana Lawson (b. 1979; Rochester, NY) creates images that are rooted in a moment from the tangible world, but ultimately exist in the shimmering in-between space of dreams, memories, and spiritual communion, where the everyday is transfigured into the uncanny and the magnificent. Her photographs and films result from collaborations with strangers whom the artist encounters by chance or deliberately seeks out. These individuals are often depicted within richly textured domestic settings in which the details of decor, lighting, and pose are precisely choreographed. In this way, Lawson draws on the legacies of historical portraiture, documentary photography, and the family album, but transcends these traditions, constructing scenes that merge lived experience with imagined narratives.

The aesthetics and intergenerational connectivity of the Black diaspora guide Lawson’s choice of subject matter. Each of her works takes its place in an overarching project, cohering into what she terms “an ever-expanding mythological extended family.” Close examination of her compositions reveals the presence of portals, adornments, and devotional objects that evoke the proximity of an unseen realm. This sense of the celestial is heightened by images of sublime natural phenomena such as galaxies and waterfalls, and in instances where the radiance of an individual seems to burn through the surface of the work itself. Lawson’s works also demonstrate a special attention to the element of light, as both key to the process by which photographs are produced, and a manifestation of the divinity that suffuses her sitters. Recently, Lawson has begun to set her works in mirrored frames that reflect light outward and materialize an exchange between her subjects and the viewer; in her words, they function as “a reflective lining between worlds, that which is ‘seen’ in the photograph, and that which ‘sees.’”

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The works in the exhibition are on loan from the artist; Sikkema Jenkins & Co., New York; David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles; and Mr. and Mrs. Laurent Opman. #HugoBossPrize #DeanaLawson

To learn more about the exhibition, download the Guggenheim Digital Guide, available for free on the Bloomberg Connects app. Look for this icon 🗳️

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