

## *Feeling Homesick At Home*

**NIC Kay, Grace Kubiilus, Ato Ribiero, WORK/PLAY**  
**Curated by Anastasia Karpova Tinari**

**April 7th-28th**

**Opening Reception: Friday, April 7th 6-9pm**

ACRE Projects is pleased to announce *Feeling Homesick At Home*, an exhibition of new work by artists NIC Kay, Grace Kubiilus, Ato Ribiero and WORK/PLAY

*Feeling Homesick at Home*: How does one cope when the very essence or foundations of home are questioned? Re-making an American flag in silkscreened black cloth; employing kente cloth and African-American quilting patterning; performing a cultural wake to Get Well Soon; or exploring female identity using the body and textile, the four artists in *Feeling Homesick at Home* articulate diverse identities within the complicated American experience. NIC Kay, Grace Kubiilus, Ato Ribiero, and WORK/PLAY use design, textile, sculpture, and performance to effectuate a more representative visual culture and national ritual, reverberating a disconnect between America's contested reality and its ideals of equality and liberty.

In WORK/PLAY's *Our Allegiance*, rich blue-black and purple-black kente cloth patterning replace the American flag's red and white stripes. The St. Louis based collaborative reclaims and takes possession of our foundational national symbol through lovingly silk screening and sewing together strips of cloth, a meditation on freedom. In the artists' words, "For many, [the flag] means freedom, but to blacks and many other people of color, it's a symbol of oppression." Ghanaian-American artist Ato Ribiero's conceptual practice likewise incorporates kente cloth, as well as African-American quilt patterns, thereby bridging his West African heritage and African-American identity in Western culture. Ribiero's abstract wood panels are precisely pieced together from different shades of natural and repurposed wood and replicate embedded patterns and messages from African and African-American textiles. For instance, the Adinkra (visual symbols created by the Ashanti people of Ghana) symbol of Sankofa means "return and retrieve it", which visually communicates the importance of the past.

Grace Kubiilus' grotesquely beautiful textile sculptures and wearable objects use the body as an absent armature to explore and rationalize female identity. Elevating the rough surfaces of stitched, folded, and rolled fabric materials, Kubiilus' textile piece in *Feeling Homesick at Home* serves as a stand-in for the body: limp, wrinkled, controlled and uncontrollable. In an accompanying video, we see the artist's body undergoing touching, pinching, caressing, and slapping, from anonymous hands. NIC Kay's strong, poetic movement and performance work engages the public with their contemporary African-American experience. The ongoing project *Get Well Soon* is a meditation on the cultural trope as it applies to the current social-political landscape. For ACRE, NIC Kay takes an excerpt, titled *Shawaam / Dip / Death Drop*,

and extends the performance practice into an exhibition context. After Nic Kay's performance of a slow, dramatic drop, a stage set will remain as a shell for the artist's body. Together, the artists in *Feeling Homesick at Home* create dialogue around the complications and alienation of African-American and female identity in the contemporary American landscape, echoing a nationwide nostalgia for an America that has yet to be realized.

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New York-based artist **NIC Kay** makes performances and organizes performative spaces. They are obsessed with the act and process of moving a place, production of space, position, and the clarity/meaning gleaned from a shifting of perspective. NIC's current trans-disciplinary projects explore movement as a place of reclamation for the body, history, and spirituality. NIC has shown work, spoken on panels and hosted workshops at numerous venues throughout the United States and abroad. In 2016 they developed a web series called the Bronx Cunt Tour around their debut solo performance, *lil BLK for Open TV*, which premiered in April 2016. NIC Kay is currently a 2017 Movement Research Artist-in-Residence Van Lier Fellow in New York City.

**Grace Kubilius** is an interdisciplinary Artist whose work includes wearable objects, sculpture, and performance. She graduated with a BFA in Fiber and Experimental Fashion from the Maryland Institute College of Art in 2013 and is currently pursuing her MFA at Virginia Commonwealth University. Grace has been a Resident Artist at Pyramid Atlantic Art Center and Craft Alliance Center of Art and Design. Her work has been shown at the Baltimore Museum of Art, Reese Gallery, and Society for Contemporary Craft. Her upcoming exhibitions include Ohio Craft Museum, Duara Gallery at Lynchburg College, Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art, and Fuller Craft Museum.

**Ato Ribeiro** was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and spent the formative years of his life in Accra, Ghana. He has worked in a variety of media, including sculpture, installation art, drawing, and printmaking. His work has been exhibited at venues such as the Nubuke Foundation (Accra, Ghana), ABSA Gallery (Johannesburg, South Africa), the Mercedes-Benz Financial Services Headquarters (Farmington Hills, Michigan), The Ink Shop (Ithaca, New York), Agnes Scott College Dalton Gallery (Atlanta, Georgia), and most recently at the Cranbrook Art Museum (Bloomfield Hills, Michigan), and at the Detroit Artist Market Gallery (Detroit, Michigan). Ribeiro received his B.A. from Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia and is currently completing his M.F.A. in Print Media from Cranbrook Academy of Art.

**WORK/PLAY** is an interdisciplinary design duo based in St. Louis, MO. Kevin McCoy is an alumnus of the University of Missouri--St. Louis where he earned a BFA in Graphic Communication. Danielle McCoy attended Webster University where she studied International Relations. The two often use illustration, minimal design, time-

based media, and experimental printmaking practices to create pieces that disseminate a message, spark dialogue, and inspire an audience. Their current body of work investigates predisposed stereotypes and narratives pertaining to the African diaspora often propagated by media. WORK/PLAY has exhibited at the Mark Miller Gallery in New York, The Sheldon Galleries in St. Louis, the O Cinema Wynwood in Miami and a host of other local galleries in the St. Louis metropolitan area. The duo was also recipients of the artist support grant from the Regional Arts Commission.

**Anastasia Karpova Tinari** is a Chicago-based art historian, curator, and writer interested in artwork that questions national identity, exposes and subverts political power structures, and broadens a prevailing art historical narrative. Anastasia is the Director of Rhona Hoffman Gallery, Curatorial Fellow at Acre Residency & Exhibitions, and a regular contributor to Newcity and The Seen. Prior to Rhona Hoffman Gallery, Anastasia was a curatorial fellow at the Indianapolis Museum of Art, Coordinator of Museum and Exhibition Studies at UIC, and worked Museum Education at the National Gallery of Art, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC and the Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice, Italy.