

MARY BOONE GALLERY

745 FIFTH AVENUE NEW YORK, NY 10151. 212.752.2929

DAWOUD BEY

The Birmingham Project

1 May to 28 June 2014

On 1 May 2014, Mary Boone Gallery will open at its Fifth Avenue location an exhibition of photographs by DAWOUD BEY from his series *The Birmingham Project*.

The Birmingham Project is a response to the tragic events of the Civil Rights Movement that unfolded on Sunday, 15 September 1963 in Birmingham, Alabama. That morning, a time-delay bomb planted by a Ku Klux Klan group at the Sixteenth Street Baptist church exploded, killing four young girls. In the racial strife that ensued, two teenage boys were also killed.

Beginning in 2005, Dawoud Bey made periodic visits to Birmingham with the idea to commemorate this history through his work. As the fiftieth anniversary of the violence approached, an invitation from the Birmingham Museum of Art provided the catalyst for Bey to realize this project.

Over a period of five months at two locations in Birmingham – the Museum and the Bethel Baptist Church, a site of earlier segregationist attacks – Bey took photographs that he would use to produce this series of large-scale portraits of present-day residents. His subjects are children of the same age as the victims and adults fifty years older, the age the deceased should have reached. Each squarely faces the camera. With a symmetry of background and gesture, the images are paired into diptychs that conflate the present with the past and evoke wrenching loss and unrealized hopes while posing a challenge for the future.

Also on view is 9.15.63, a single-channel video Bey shot in Birmingham. Devoid of human presence and also following a diptych format, the video is a meditation on that early Sunday morning. The left camera observes charged social spaces for the black community momentarily defused by their stillness: a beauty parlor, barbershop, lunch counter and school classroom. On the right, images of blue sky, trees, and rooftops roll by as if glimpsed by a child through the window of a car.

Additional works from Dawoud Bey's *The Birmingham Project* are currently on view in the Whitney Museum of American Art 2014 Biennial Exhibition. The Mary Boone Gallery exhibition, at 745 Fifth Avenue, will remain on view through 28 June 2014.

For further information, please contact Ron Warren at the Gallery, or visit our website www.maryboonegallery.com