



GuildHall

GUILD HALL MUSEUM OPENS ITS SUMMER EXHIBITION SEASON WITH *THE INNOCENTS*, A SEMINAL WORK BY TARYN SIMON ON VIEW JUNE 17–JULY 30, 2017

The exhibition coincides with the 25th anniversary of the Innocence Project, a non-profit legal organization that works to reform the criminal justice system.



Troy Webb

Scene of the crime, The Pines, Virginia Beach, Virginia
Served 7 years of a 47-year sentence for Rape, Kidnapping and Robbery

The Innocents, 2002
Framed archival inkjet print and Letraset on wall
48 1/4 x 62 1/4 inches (122.6 x 158.1 cm)

© Taryn Simon. Courtesy Gagosian Gallery

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New York, NY March 28, 2017 – The work of Taryn Simon results from rigorous research guided by an interest in systems of categorization and the precarious nature of survival. Turning our attention to the margins of power, where control, disruption, and the contours of its constructedness become visible, she reveals the imperceptible space between language and the visual world—a space in which multiple truths and fantasies are constructed, and where translation and disorientation occur. The technical, physical, and aesthetic realization of her



GuildHall

projects often reflects the control and authority that are the very subject of her work. Invoking the form of the archive, Simon imposes the illusion of order on the chaotic and indeterminate nature of her subjects.

Simon's earliest body of work, *The Innocents* (2002), documents the stories of individuals who served time in prison for violent crimes they did not commit. At issue is the question of photography's function as a credible eyewitness and arbiter of justice. The primary cause of wrongful conviction is mistaken identification. A victim or eyewitness identifies a suspected perpetrator through law enforcement's use of photographs and lineups. This procedure relies on the assumption of precise visual memory. But through exposure to composite sketches, mug shots, Polaroids, and lineups, eyewitness memory can change. In the history of these cases, photography offered the criminal-justice system a tool that transformed innocent citizens into criminals. Photographs assisted officers in obtaining eyewitness identifications and aided prosecutors in securing convictions. Simon photographed these men at sites that had particular significance to their illegitimate conviction: the scene of misidentification, the scene of arrest, the scene of the crime, or the scene of the alibi. All of these locations hold contradictory meanings for the subjects. The scene of arrest marks the starting point of a reality based in fiction. The scene of the crime is at once arbitrary and crucial: this place, to which they have never been, changed their lives forever. In these photographs Simon confronts photography's ability to blur truth and fiction—an ambiguity that can have severe, even lethal, consequences.

The Innocents was produced with the support of a John Simon Guggenheim grant and was first exhibited at MoMA PS1 in New York.

ABOUT TARYN SIMON

Taryn Simon (b. 1975) is a multidisciplinary artist working in photography, text, sculpture and performance. Her works have been the subject of exhibitions at the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Copenhagen (2016-17), The Albertinum, Dresden (2016), Galerie Rudolfinum, Prague (2016), Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow (2016), Jeu de Paume, Paris (2015), Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing (2013); Museum of Modern Art, New York (2012); Tate Modern, London (2011); Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin (2011); and Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2007).

Permanent collections include Metropolitan Museum of Art, Tate Modern, the Guggenheim Museum, Centre Georges Pompidou, and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Her work was included in the 56th Venice Biennale (2015). Simon's installation, *An Occupation of Loss* (2016) premiered at the Park Avenue Armory in New York and will be re-staged by Artangel at an outdoor location in the UK. Simon is a graduate of Brown University and a Guggenheim Fellow. She lives and works in New York.

ABOUT THE INNOCENCE PROJECT



GuildHall

Since 1992, close to 350 people have been exonerated by DNA testing in the United States. The Innocence Project, associated with New York's Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law, provided direct representation or critical assistance in more than half of the cases and has worked to pass more than one hundred state and federal laws to prevent and address wrongful convictions, including in the area of eyewitness identification. The Innocence Project's use of DNA technology to uncover wrongful convictions has helped to transform the nation's approach to criminal justice by revealing systematic defects. Simon's *The Innocents* serves as a record of the earliest exonerations through DNA evidence in the United States.

ABOUT GUILD HALL

Guild Hall is an arts, entertainment, and education center for the community. Its primary focus is to inform, inspire, and enrich our diverse audiences by presenting programs of the highest quality in the visual and performing arts, to collaborate with artists of eastern Long Island, to foster the artistic spirit and to provide a meeting place for all. In 1931, Mrs. Lorenzo E. Woodhouse dedicated Guild Hall as a cultural center for the community. Each year, more than 40,000 visitors take advantage of the hundreds of events offered by our three departments.

The Guild Hall Museum features world-class art exhibitions of internationally renowned visual artists and emerging regional artists. The Museum also develops local talent through a series of community art exhibitions. One of the principal directives of the Museum is to collect, preserve and present the works of accomplished East End artists with a significant permanent collection and archive approximately 2,100 works of art.

+++

Press Contact:

Juliana Biondo
SUTTON
juliana@suttonpr.com
+1 212 202 3402