

ANNA ZORINA GALLERY

ALEXANDRIA SMITH: Monuments to an Effigy featuring the original score by Liz Gré

EXPO CHICAGO

Anna Zorina Gallery Booth 445

Alexandria Smith's solo presentation at Expo Chicago Exposure section will be a reinterpretation of her recent Queens Museum solo exhibition *Monuments to an Effigy*.

Monuments to an Effigy takes the histories of The Olde Towne of Flushing Burial Ground and the Macedonia A.M.E. Church in Flushing, Queens as points of departure. In the late 19th century, The Olde Towne of Flushing Burial Ground was used as a cemetery for African Americans and Native Americans. Parishioners of the nearby Macedonia A.M.E. Church, a location that was believed to be a part of the Flushing Underground Railroad, were among those interred at the burial ground. In the 1930s, the Parks Department paved over The Olde Towne of Flushing Burial Ground to build a playground.

While information around these histories is being revived due to the tireless work of activists and researchers, the remaining information is often limited, partial, and gendered. Smith's work honors resilience and strength of the unnamed women who lived during this time. In this exhibition, the artist explores narrative, memory, and myth through the lens of the Black female form and psyche.

Smith's fragmented characters, landscapes, and objects are shown either rooted to the ground or rising up in space. Works in the exhibition, installed in pairs, embody a complex and often divided self across generations. How can we rectify and remember the stories that have been erased? The symbols in *Monuments to an Effigy* are at once both ancient and otherworldly, and are used by Smith to channel, reclaim, and reimagine stories of hardship and resistance.

A cornerstone of the exhibition is *At Council; Found Peace*, a composition by Liz Gré in collaboration with Alexandria Smith. This piece written for cello, soprano, and spoken voice combines the poetry of Gwendolyn Brooks with gospel tonality, tapping into the spiritual influences present in the installation. The composition explores the process of seeking guidance from those who came before and how we can amplify the legacies of Black women today.

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