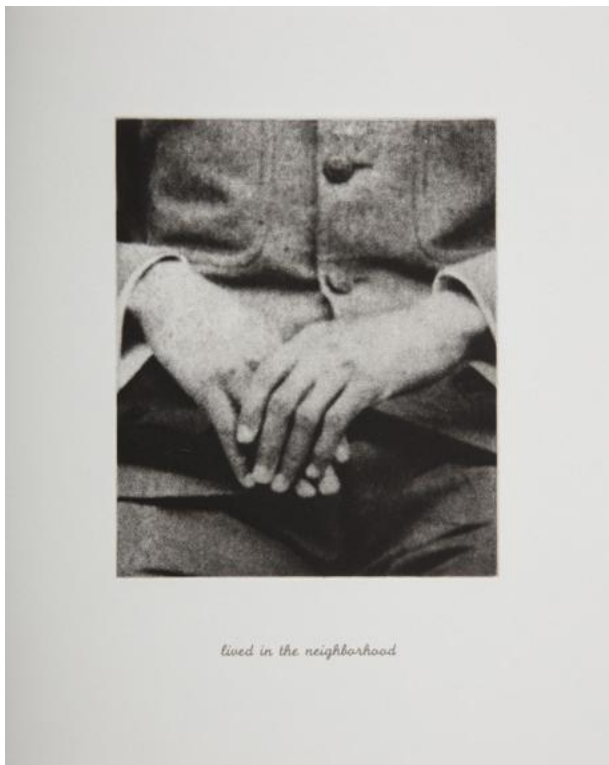


Basic Detail Report



Details

Date

1996

Primary Maker

Lorna Simpson

Medium

Portfolio of 21 photogravures with text printed on 30C (300 lbs.) Somerset paper.

Description

Although Lorna Simpson initially trained as a documentary photographer on the East Coast, her decision to attend graduate school at the University of California, San Diego (where she earned her master of fine arts degree in 1985), introduced her to conceptual and performance practices that had emerged in Los Angeles in the 1970s. While her work consists primarily of still photography and film, it often verges on installation. Details is one example: it is a portfolio of prints designed to be framed individually but installed as a group (four of the twenty-one are illustrated here). The cropped images of hands that appear in the portfolio are all enlarged reprints of found studio portraits of people of color taken in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries;

Simpson paired each image with a word or short phrase that appears below it, caption-like. The viewer is left to ponder the relationship between text and image: do the words describe the individuals depicted? Are they meant to illuminate, or obfuscate? "What I've tried to do," the artist has explained in relation to her photographic work, "is create contradictions—an edge between the subject and the interpretation about how a 'subject' is viewed or contextualized." The present work calls attention to the assumptions we make about people on the basis of their physical appearance—even just their hands. The phrase below may support or challenge those assumptions, or perhaps seem completely unrelated. Printed in an edition of forty, Details is representative of Simpson's works of the late 1980s and early 1990s, which tend to incorporate text and focus on Black bodies—often specific parts of the body, such as lips or hair, rather than the body in full. Elements of fragmentation and seriality are common, and meaning is layered. This portfolio, like much of Simpson's oeuvre, is deeply concerned with personal versus historical memory. (SOURCE: Alcauskas, INNOVATIVE APPROACHES, HONORED TRADITIONS, 2017) Portfolio of 21 photogravures with text printed on 30C (300 lbs.) Somerset paper.

Dimensions

Image (Each): 7 × 5 in. (17.8 × 12.7 cm) Sheet (Each): 10 × 8 in. (25.4 × 20.3 cm) Overall (Portfolio box): 10 1/2 × 8 1/2 in. (26.7 × 21.6 cm) Frame (Each): 12 3/8 × 10 3/8 × 2 in. (31.4 × 26.4 × 5.1 cm)