



Deborah-Joyce Holman
Close-Up
January 22 – April 13, 2025

Swiss Institute is pleased to present *Close-Up*, the first institutional exhibition in the US by Deborah-Joyce Holman. Holman contends with the politics of representation of racialized and gendered subjects, interrogating the relationships between contemporary visual regimes and the material and ideological circulations of capital. *Close-Up* attends to and articulates sites of refusal with a single-channel film that features a contemplative Black actress in a modernist domestic setting, quietly engaged in mundane tasks.

Presented in SI's lower-level gallery, *Close-Up* minutely restages a scene in a previous multichannel video work by the artist, *Close-Up/Quiet As It's Kept* (2023). In each of these works, the viewer is presented with a despectacularized, non-narrative sequence that features the same actress in the same place. The camera trails behind as the figure enacts a series of quotidian movements - from drinking tea to lying on a couch - and pans across the home, focusing on its architectural details and various furnishings.

In contrast to the earlier work, *Close-Up* is shot on 16 mm film and trains the camera's lens on the actress's face and the interior space in close-up range throughout its duration. Framed from the clavicle to the crown, the magnified image of her expressionless countenance and the surrounding setting oscillates between portrait and anti-portrait. In dramatizing the dissonance between the actress's intimate framing and her minor gestures, *Close-Up* formally challenges viewers' presumed access to the interiority of marginalized subjects appearing on screen. The quality of the analog film also produces a textured celluloid veil that destabilizes the transparency of narrative by privileging haptic modes of encounter.

In *Close-Up*, Holman proposes a conceptual correspondence between the serial repetition of the film work and the ongoingly reproduced forms of structural and symbolic violence imposed on racialized and gendered subjects. If the aesthetic regimes of cinematic technology and the expropriated labors of these invisibilized subjects are bound up with one another, *Close-Up* looks beyond political grammars of repair to consider the quiet, disruptive frequencies of Black feminine agency within the filmic field of representation.

Close-Up, 2024

16mm color film transferred to 4k UHD video
Stereo sound, (16:33 min, looped)

Credits:

Actress	Tia Bannon
Producer	Tobi Kyeremateng, Priya Palak
Production Runner	KC Uguw
Studio Assistant	Shantelle Palmer
Director of Photography	Adenike Oke
First Assistant	Camera Joshua Baylis
Clapper Loader	Vaimiti Lebrere
Gaffer	Chad Morris
Spark	Teriq Roberts
Production Designer	Elizabeth Anibaba
Art Assistant	Hannah Naomi
Editor	Deborah Joyce Holman
Colorist	Anibal Castaño
Sound Designer	Chad Orororo
Unit Stills	Xanthus

Deborah-Joyce Holman wishes to thank Alison Coplan, Digital Orchard, Emmyland, Focus Canning, Heinrich Dietz, KJ Abudu, Kodak, Marilena Rufeisen and Stefanie Hessler.

This exhibition is organized by Alison Coplan, Chief Curator, and KJ Abudu, Assistant Curator, Public Programs and Residencies. In partnership with Kunstverein Freiburg.

About Deborah-Joyce Holman

Deborah-Joyce Holman is a multidisciplinary artist based between London, UK, and Basel, CH. Their work has recently been shown at Kunstverein Freiburg; TANK Shanghai (both 2024); Kunsthalle Bern (2023); Cordova, Barcelona; Istituto Svizzero, Palermo; schwarzescafé, Luma Westbau, Zurich; Institute of Contemporary Arts, London (all 2022); 7th Athens Biennial; Cherish, Geneva; Yaby, Madrid; Centre d'Art Contemporain, Geneva (all 2021); La Quadriennale di Roma (2020); Mikro, Zurich; Fondation Entreprise Ricard, Paris; Auto Italia, London (all 2019), among others. From 2020-2022, Holman worked at East London arts organization Auto Italia as Associate Director. They were the founding director of 1.1, a platform for early-career practitioners in arts, music and text-based practices, with an exhibition space in Basel, CH, which ran 2015-2020. Holman curated the 2018 and 2019 annual group exhibitions for the arts and music festival Les Urbaines, Lausanne, presenting newly commissioned works by over 15 international artists.

About Swiss Institute

Founded in 1986, Swiss Institute (SI) is an independent nonprofit contemporary art institution dedicated to promoting forward-thinking and experimental artmaking through innovative exhibitions, education, and programs. Committed to the highest standards of curatorial and educational excellence, SI serves as a platform for emerging artists, catalyzes new perspectives on celebrated work, and fosters appreciation for under-recognized positions. SI is committed to being an organization that is diverse, equitable, accessible, and environmentally conscious in its work, structure, and programming. Open to the public free of charge, SI seeks to explore how a Swiss context can be the starting point for international conversations in the fields of visual and performing arts, design, and architecture.

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