

**Württem  
bergischer  
Kunst  
verein  
Stuttgart**

**Carrie Mae Weems**

***The Evidence of Things Not Seen***

April 2 – July 10, 2022

PRESS RELEASE

Preview for the press: Thursday, March 31, 2022, 11 a.m.

Opening: Friday, April 1, 2022, 7 p.m.

Opening program: April 2, 2022, 1 p.m.

The artist is present



Carrie Mae Weems, from: *The Push, The Pull, The Scream, The Dream*, 2020

*The Evidence of Things Not Seen* is the first comprehensive solo exhibition of the artist Carrie Mae Weems (b. 1953) in Germany. Weems is one of the most influential contemporary artists in the United States, whose aesthetic and political impact extends far beyond the art world. In 2014 she was the first African American artist to be given a retrospective at the Guggenheim Museum in New York.

With over thirty bodies of work, including extensive photographic projects, videos, objects, and installations, *The Evidence of Things Not Seen* offers a multi-layered look at Weems' artistic practice, which has been developing for more than thirty-five years. For the exhibition a spatial setting was designed together with the artist that follows the performative character of her practice.

*The Evidence of Things Not Seen* opens to press on March 31, 2022 at 11 a.m. with the artist in attendance. The public opening takes place on Friday, April 1, 2022, at 7 p.m. The opening program starts on April 2, at 1 p.m.

Carrie Mae Weems' works concern themselves with the questioning and appropriation of dominant historical narratives, as generated and reproduced in (educational) institutions, science, art, architecture, monuments, photography, and other mass media. By seeking out and reenacting these narratives she uncovers the unheard and unseen histories of the marginalized groups within them. Weems, who appears in many of her works herself, leads us to these blind spots in person and invites us to explore them together.

The exhibition's focus is on the long history of violence against people of color, women, and the socially disadvantaged, which Weems counters with an equally long history of resistance. Body, beauty, ritual, magic, and spirituality, the public and private, the political and poetic are of central importance here. In this way she uncovers other possible courses of history – and thus also of the future.

The classroom as an instance for preserving a certain canon of knowledge and values and at the same time as a place and stage for the collective invention of new narratives is one of the leitmotifs of the exhibition.

Other fields of reference include the social division of the public space implemented through architecture and urban planning, the cultural traces of slavery, the ambivalence of popular cultures such as carnival and vaudeville, and the resistant dimensions of voice and music.

In addition to earlier works such as the photographic series *From Here I Saw What Happened and I Cried* (1995–96) or *The Kitchen Table Series* (1990), the exhibition also shows numerous more recent and new works in which, for example, Weems addresses forms of public remembrance and thus connects with current debates. On view for the first time is a photographic work in which Weems deals with the Berlin Holocaust Memorial in a performative way.

A series of photographic and video projects take up the police violence against African Americans in the US, reaching from the 1960s till today. Motifs of flight, mourning, remembering, and protest are interwoven here into poetic manifestoes against forgetting.

The title of the exhibition was borrowed from the book of the same name by African American activist and writer James Baldwin. It was written against the backdrop of the murders of 30 black children and young people in Atlanta at the beginning of the 1980s and the ignorance of the authorities towards these acts.

*The Evidence of Things not Seen* is organized by Württembergischer Kunstverein in the context of a collaboration with Fundación MAPFRE and Fundación Foto Colectania. The exhibition is generously supported by the Kulturstiftung des Bundes and the Baden-Württemberg Stiftung.

## About the artist

Carrie Mae Weems, \*1953 in Portland, Oregon, USA, lives in Syracuse, New York, USA

*Carrie Mae Weems is represented by Jack Shainman Gallery, New York, and Galerie Barbara Thumm, Berlin. Further information and a detailed biography can also be found on the artist's website ([carriemaeweems.net](http://carriemaeweems.net)).*

Weems works in and between the realms of photography, video, poetry, performance, and installation and develops collaborative projects for the public space. Additionally, she teaches, curates exhibitions, as well as transdisciplinary events, as an extension and resonant space for her artistic practice. She regularly collaborates with other artists, including Mary J. Blige, Spike Lee, or Carl Hancock Rux.

Since the beginning of her engagement with photography in the late 1970s — marked by the examination of a wide spectrum of artists ranging from Robert Frank to Roy DeCarava — Carrie Mae Weems has been deeply concerned with the limits of photography and the expansion of its canon, including the excluded and the forgotten. Furthermore, she investigates how photography as well as other media and forms of representation produce constructions of race, gender, and class.

A central theme of her work is the body — especially the body of the oppressed and marginalized — whose grace, beauty, vulnerability, and strength she celebrates. She examines it in relation to architecture, city, landscape, on the threshold of presence and absence, as an object of optical media or art history, and as a subject of emancipatory processes. Weems herself appears in many of her image series, not as an autobiographical instance, but rather as a witness, companion, or guide who brings us closer to certain places and situations.

Weems has participated in numerous solo and group exhibitions at U.S. and international museums, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the Frist Center for Visual Art, Nashville; the Cleveland Museum of Art; the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; and the Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo in Seville.

She has received numerous awards, grants, and fellowships, including the Mac Arthur Fellowship, most recently the Artes Mundi Prize 2021, and is currently an artist in residence with the Park Avenue Armory program.

Weems is represented in public and private collections worldwide, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; and the Tate Modern, London.

## **Dates and credits**

Carrie Mae Weems

*The Evidence of Things Not Seen*

### **Curators**

Hans D. Christ, Iris Dressler

### **Duration**

April 2 – July 10, 2022

### **Supported by**

Kulturamt der Stadt Stuttgart

Ministerium für Wissenschaft, Forschung und Kunst des Landes Baden-Württemberg

Kulturstiftung des Bundes

Baden-Württemberg Stiftung

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### **Press photos and press kit**

<https://www.wkv-stuttgart.de/en/press/2022>

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### **Online / Social Media**

[www.wkv-stuttgart.de](http://www.wkv-stuttgart.de)

<https://www.facebook.com/wuerttembergischer.kunstverein>

<https://www.instagram.com/wuerttembergischerkunstverein>

### **Opening hours**

Tue–Sun: 11 a.m. – 6 p.m., Wed: 11 a.m. – 8 p.m.

### **Admission**

5 Euro, 3 Euro reduced, members of WKV: free