

locustprojects

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Locust Projects presents
PROJECT ROOM:
Leila Weefur:
PLAY+PREY

Exhibition Dates:
February 19 - April 9, 2022

Related Programs:
OPENING RECEPTION
Friday, February 18, 7-9pm

Public Hours:
Wednesday to Saturday
11am – 5pm

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Press kit and images:
[Available here](#)

LOCUST PROJECTS PRESENTS NEW GOSPEL BY ARTIST LEILA WEEFUR February 19 - April 9, 2022



Leila Weefur, Still from *PLAY+PREY*, 2021.

[Miami, FL] Locust Projects presents *PLAY+PREY*, a gospel by artist Leila Weefur, presented as a multi-channel film experience, that recounts a relationship between God, the Church, and a queer Black child. The exhibition opens to the public with a reception on Friday, February 18 and is on view through April 9, 2022, Wednesdays-Saturdays from 11am-5pm. Admission is free.

“We go to the cinema to escape so that the film can swallow you whole and let your daily life dissolve. I hope to do the same with my films. To create video installations that evoke the sensorial experience of cinema. Telling stories translated through my own experience, I can create narratives that allow people to feel something uniquely personal and ensure that my practice also feeds into an eco-system of queer and BIPOC communities.”

– Leila Weefur

The four-part film, and its accompanying architectural display, explore the playful impulses, innocence, and underlying violence implicated in the experience of queer Black children in the Christian Church. Beginning with an overture to the story of queer Biblical reclamation, this film builds a spiritual narrative that contemplates the structures, literally and metaphorically, and the rules imposed on pleasure, play, and sexuality under the rigidity of Black Christianity.

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The narrative takes inspiration from four lyrical sermons from James Weldon Johnson's *God's Trombone: Seven Negro Sermons in Verse*:

*In that great day,
People, in that great day,
God's a-going to rain down fire.
God's a-going to sit in the middle of the air
To judge the quick and the dead.*

— "The Judgement Day" *God's Trombones: Seven Negro Sermons in Verse*, James Weldon Johnson

In the second collaboration with KYN (Josh Casey & Yari Bundy) and with contributions from vocalist Sandra Lawson-Ndu, the film's original soundtrack recreates elements familiar to Christian gospel, combined with contemporary influences, to create a textured and personal touch. Filmed in the Havenscourt Community Church (Oakland, CA), where Weefur was baptized, the semi-autobiographical work also brings architectural structures common to the church into the installation.



ABOUT THE ARTIST

Leila Weefur (He/They/She) is an artist, writer, and curator based in Oakland, CA. Through video and installation, their interdisciplinary practice examines the performativity intrinsic to systems of belonging. The work brings together concepts of sensorial memory, abject Blackness, hyper surveillance, and the erotic. Weefur is a recipient of the Walter & Elise Haas Creative Work Fund and the MSP California Black Voices Project. Weefur has worked with local and national institutions including The Wattis Institute, McEvoy Foundation, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, SFMOMA, Museum of the African Diaspora, and Smack Mellon. Weefur's writing has been published in SEEN by BlackStar Productions, Sming Sming Books, Baest Journal, and more. Weefur is a lecturer at Stanford University.

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ABOUT LOCUST PROJECTS

Founded by artists for artists in 1998, Locust Projects is Miami's longest running nonprofit alternative art space. We produce, present, and nurture ambitious and experimental new art and the exchange of ideas through commissioned exhibitions and projects, artist residencies, summer art intensives for teens, and public programs on contemporary art and curatorial practice. As a leading incubator of new art and ideas, Locust Projects emphasizes boundary-pushing creative endeavors, risk-taking and experimentation by local, national and international artists. We invest in South Florida's arts community by providing artists with project grants and empower creative careers by supporting the administrative work of being an artist through an onsite artist resource hub and access to pro bono legal services.

Locust Projects 2021-2022 exhibitions and programming are made possible with support from: The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation; The Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs and the Cultural Affairs Council, the Miami-Dade County Mayor and Board of County Commissioners, The Children's Trust; The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts; The National Endowment for the Arts Art Works Grant; Susan and Richard Arregui; Hillsdale Fund; the Albert and Jane Nahmad Family Foundation; VIA Art Fund | Wagner Foundation Incubator Grant; Diane and Robert Moss; Elizabeth Bailey; Cowles Charitable Trust; Diane and Werner Grob; Kirk Foundation; Diane and Alan Lieberman; Artis; and the Incubator Fund Supporting Sponsors and Friends.

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